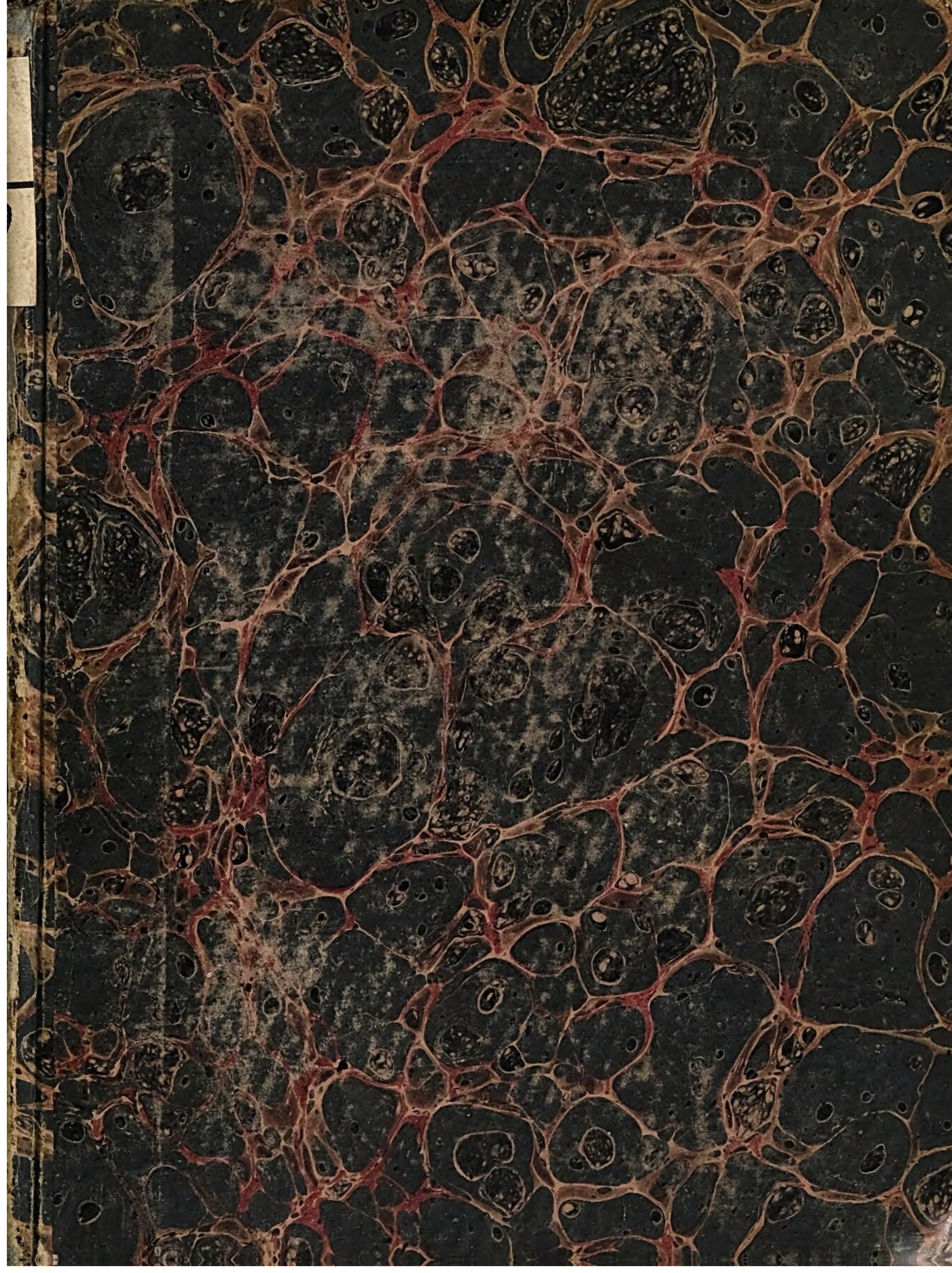




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WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?

VOL. II.

WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?

BY

PISISTRATUS CAXTON.

(SIR EDWARD BULWER LYTTON, BART.)

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VOL. II.

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WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?

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VOL. II.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER IX.

The Nomad, entering into civilised life, adopts its arts, shaves his poodle, and puts on a black coat. Hints at the process by which a Cast-off exalts himself into a Take-in.

AT twilight they stopped at a quiet inn within eight miles of Gatesboro'. Sophy, much tired, was glad to creep to bed. Waife sate up long after her; and, in preparation for the eventful morrow, washed and shaved Sir Isaac. You would not have known the dog again; he was dazzling. Not Ulysses, rejuvenated by Pallas Athenè, could have been more changed for the better. His flanks revealed a skin most daintily mottled; his tail became leonine with an imperial tuft; his mane fell in long curls, like the beard of a Ninevite king; his boots were those of a courtier

in the reign of Charles II.; his eyes looked forth in dark splendour from locks white as the driven snow. This feat performed, Waife slept the peace of the righteous, and Sir Isaac, stretched on the floor beside the bed, licked his mottled flanks and shivered — “*Il faut souffrir pour être beau.*” Much marvelling, Sophy the next morn beheld the dog; but before she was up, Waife had paid the bill and was waiting for her on the road, impatient to start. He did not heed her exclamations, half compassionate, half admiring; he was absorbed in thought. Thus they proceeded slowly on till within two miles of the town, and then Waife turned aside, entered a wood, and there, with the aid of Sophy, put the dog upon a deliberate rehearsal of the anticipated drama. The dog was not in good spirits, but he went through his part with mechanical accuracy, though slight enthusiasm.

“He is to be relied upon, in spite of his French origin,” said Waife. “All national prejudice fades before the sense of a common interest. And we shall always find more genuine solidity of character in a French poodle than in an English mastiff, whenever a poodle is of use to us, and a mastiff is not. But oh, waste of care! oh sacrifice of time to empty names! oh emblem of fashionable education! It never struck me before — does it not, child though thou art, strike thee now — by the necessities of our drama, this animal must be a French dog?”

"Well, grandfather?"

"And we have given him an English name! Precious result of our own scholastic training; taught at preparatory academies precisely that which avails us nought when we are to face the world! What is to be done? Unlearn him his own cognomen — teach him another name; too late, too late! We cannot afford the delay."

"I don't see why he should be called any name at all. He observes your signs just as well without."

"If I had but discovered that at the beginning. Pity! Such a fine name, too! Sir Isaac! *Vanitas vanitatum!* What desire chiefly kindles the ambitious? To create a name — perhaps bequeath a title — exalt into Sir Isaac a progeny of Mops! And after all, it is possible (let us hope it in this instance) that a sensible young dog may learn his letters and shoulder his musket just as well though all the appellations by which humanity knows him be condensed into a pitiful monosyllable. Nevertheless (as you will find when you are older), people are obliged in practice to renounce for themselves the application of those rules which they philosophically prescribe for others. Thus, while I grant that a change of name for *that* dog is a question belonging to the policy of Ifs and Buts, commonly called the policy of Expediency, about which one may differ with others and one's own self every quarter of an hour — a change of name for me belongs to the

policy of Must and Shall, viz., the policy of Necessity, against which let no dog bark, though I have known dogs howl at it! William Waife is no more; he is no more; he is dead — he is buried; and even Juliet Araminta is the baseless fabric of a vision.”

Sophy raised inquiringly her blue guileless eyes.

“You see before you a man who has used up the name of Waife, and who, on entering the town of Gatesboro’, becomes a sober, staid, and respectable personage, under the appellation of Chapman. You are Miss Chapman. Rugge and his exhibition ‘leave not a wrack behind.’”

Sophy smiled and then sighed — the smile for her grandfather’s gay spirits; wherefore the sigh? Was it that some instinct in that fresh, loyal nature revolted from the thought of these aliases, which, if requisite for safety, were still akin to imposture. If so, poor child, she had much yet to set right with her conscience! All I can say is, that after she had smiled she sighed. And more reasonably might a reader ask his author to subject a zephyr to the microscope than a female’s sigh to analysis.

“Take the dog with you, my dear, back into the lane; I will join you in a few minutes. You are neatly dressed, and if not, would look so. I, in this old coat, have the air of a pedlar, so I will change it, and enter the town of Gatesboro’ in the character of — a man whom you will soon see before you. Leave those

things alone, de-Isaacised Sir Isaac! Follow your mistress — go.”

Sophy left the wood, and walked on slowly towards the town, with her hand pensively resting on Sir Isaac's head. In less than ten minutes she was joined by Waife, attired in respectable black; his hat and shoes well brushed; a new green shade to his eye; and with his finest air of *Père Noble*. He was now in his favourite element. HE WAS ACTING — call it not imposture. Was Lord Chatham an impostor when he draped his flannels into the folds of the toga, and arrayed the curls of his wig so as to add more sublime effect to the majesty of his brow and the terrors of its nod? And certainly, considering that Waife, after all, was but a professional vagabond — considering all the turns and shifts to which he has been put for bread and salt — the wonder is, not that he is full of stage tricks and small deceptions, but that he has contrived to retain at heart so much childish simplicity. When a man for a series of years has only had his wits to live by, I say not that he is necessarily a rogue — he may be a good fellow; but you can scarcely expect his code of honour to be precisely the same as Sir Philip Sidney's. Homer expresses, through the lips of Achilles, that sublime love of truth, which, even in those remote times, was the becoming characteristic of a gentleman and a soldier. But, then, Achilles is well off during his whole life, which, though distinguished,

is short. On the other hand, Ulysses, who is sorely put to it, kept out of his property in Ithaca, and, in short, living on his wits, is not the less befriended by the immaculate Pallas, because his wisdom savours somewhat of stage trick and sharp practice. And as to convenient aliases and white fibs, where would have been the use of his wits, if Ulysses had disdained such arts, and been magnanimously munched up by Polyphemus? Having thus touched on the epic side of Mr. Waife's character with the clemency due to human nature, but with the caution required by the interests of society, permit him to resume a "duplex course," sanctioned by ancient precedent, but not commended to modern imitation. Just as our travellers neared the town, the screech of a railway whistle resounded towards their right — a long train rushed from the jaws of a tunnel, and shot into the neighbouring station.

"How lucky!" exclaimed Waife; "make haste, my dear!" Was he going to take the train? Pshaw! he was at his journey's end. He was going to mix with the throng that would soon stream through those white gates into the town; he was going to purloin the respectable appearance of a passenger by the train. And so well did he act the part of a bewildered stranger just vomited forth into unfamiliar places by one of those panting steam monsters, so artfully amidst the busy competition of nudging elbows, overbearing

shoulders, and the *impedimenta* of carpet-bags, port-manteaus, babies in arms, and shin-assailing trucks, did he look round consequentially on the *qui vive*, turning his one eye now on Sophy, now on Sir Isaac, and griping his bundle to his breast as if he suspected all his neighbours to be Thugs, condottieri, and swell-mob, that in an instant fly-men, omnibus-drivers, cads, and porters marked him for their own. "Gatesboro' Arms," "Spread Eagle," "Royal Hotel," "Saracen's Head, — very comfortable, centre of High Street, opposite the Town Hall," — were shouted, bawled, whispered, or whined into his ear. "Is there an honest porter?" asked the Comedian piteously. An Irishman presented himself. "And is it meself can serve your honour!" — "Take this bundle, and walk on before me to the High Street." — "Could not I take the bundle, grandfather? The man will charge so much," said the prudent Sophy. "Hush! you indeed!" said the *Père Noble*, as if addressing an exiled *Altesse royale* — "you take a bundle — Miss — Chapman!"

They soon gained the High Street. Waife examined the fronts of the various inns which they passed by, with an eye accustomed to decipher the physiognomy of hostelries. "The Saracen's Head" pleased him, though its imposing size daunted Sophy. He arrested the steps of the porter, "Follow me close," and stepped across the open threshold into the bar. The landlady herself was there, portly and imposing, with

an auburn *toupet*, a silk gown, a cameo brooch, and an ample bosom.

"You have a private sitting-room, ma'am?" said the Comedian, lifting his hat. There are so many ways of lifting a hat — for instance, the way for which Louis XIV. was so renowned. But the Comedian's way on the present occasion rather resembled that of the late Duke of Beaufort — not quite royal, but as near to royalty as becomes a subject. He added, re-covering his head — "And on the first floor?" The landlady did not curtsy, but she bowed, emerged from the bar, and set foot on the broad stairs; then, looking back graciously, her eyes rested on Sir Isaac, who had stalked forth in advance, and with expansive nostrils sniffed. She hesitated. "Your dog, sir! shall Boots take it round to the stables?"

"The stables, ma'am — the stables, my dear," turning to Sophy, with a smile more ducal than the previous bow; "what would they say at home if they heard that noble animal was consigned to — stables? Ma'am, my dog is my companion, and as much accustomed to drawing-rooms as I am myself." Still the landlady paused. The dog might be accustomed to drawing-rooms, but her drawing room was not accustomed to dogs. She had just laid down a new carpet. And such are the strange and erratic affinities in nature — such are the incongruous concatenations in the cross-stitch of ideas, that there are associations

between dogs and carpets, which, if wrongful to the owners of dogs, beget no unreasonable apprehension in the proprietors of carpets. So there stood the landlady, and there stood the dog! and there they might be standing to this day had not the Comedian dissolved the spell. "Take up my effects again," said he, turning to the porter; "doubtless they are more habituated to distinguish between dog and dog at the Royal Hotel."

The landlady was mollified in a moment. Nor was it only the rivalries that necessarily existed between the Saracen's Head and the Royal Hotel that had due weight with her. A gentleman who could not himself deign to carry even that small bundle, must be indeed a gentleman! Had he come with a portmanteau — even with a carpet-bag — the porter's service would have been no evidence of rank; but, accustomed as she was chiefly to gentlemen engaged in commercial pursuits, it was new to her experience, — a gentleman with effects so light, and hands so aristocratically helpless. Herein were equally betokened the two attributes of birth and wealth — viz., the habit of command, and the disdain of shillings. A vague remembrance of the wellknown story how a man and his dog had arrived at the Granby Hotel, at Harrogate, and been sent away roomless to the other and less patrician establishment, because, while he had a dog, he had not a servant; when five minutes after such dismissal,

came carriages and lackeys, and an imperious valet, asking for his grace the Duke of A —, who had walked on before with his dog, and who, O everlasting thought of remorse! had been sent away to bring the other establishment into fashion; — a vague reminiscence of that story, I say, flashed upon the landlady's mind, and she exclaimed, "I only thought, sir, you might prefer the stables; of course, it is as you please — this way, sir. He is a fine animal, indeed, and seems mild."

"You may bring up the bundle, porter," quoth the *Père Noble*. "Take my arm, my dear; these steps are very steep."

The landlady threw open the door of a handsome sitting-room — her best: she pulled down the blinds to shut out the glare of the sun, then, retreating to the threshold, awaited further orders.

"Rest yourself, my dear," said the Actor placing Sophy on a couch with that tender respect for sex and childhood which so especially belongs to the high-bred. "The room will do, ma'am. I will let you know later whether we shall require beds. As to dinner, I am not particular — a cutlet — a chicken — what you please — at seven o'clock. Stay, I beg your pardon for detaining you; but where does the Mayor live?"

"His private residence is a mile out of the town;

but his counting-house is just above the Town-Hall — to the right, sir!”

“Name?”

“Mr. Hartopp!”

“Hartopp! Ah! to be sure! Hartopp. His political opinions, I think are (ventures at a guess) enlightened!”

LANDLADY. — “Very much so, sir. Mr. Hartopp is highly respected.”

WAIFF. — “The chief municipal officer of a town so thriving — fine shops and much plate-glass — must march with the times. I think I have heard that Mr. Hartopp promotes the spread of intelligence and the propagation of knowledge.”

LANDLADY (rather puzzled). — “I dare say, sir. The Mayor takes great interest in the Gatesboro’ Atheneum and Literary Institute.”

WAIFF. — “Exactly what I should have presumed from his character and station. I will detain you no longer, ma’am” (Duke of Beaufort bow). The landlady descended the stairs. Was her guest a candidate for the representation of the town at the next election? March with the times — spread of intelligence! All candidates she ever knew had that way of expressing themselves — “March” and “Spread.” Not an address

had parliamentary aspirant put forth to the freemen and electors of Gatesboro', but what "March" had been introduced by the candidate, and "Spread" been suggested by the committee. Still she thought that her guest, upon the whole, looked and bowed more like a member of the Upper House. Perhaps one of the amiable though occasionally prosy peers who devote the teeth of wisdom to the cracking of those very hard nuts — "How to educate the masses," "What to do with our criminals," and suchlike problems, upon which already have been broken so many jawbones tough as that with which Samson slew the Philistines.

"Oh, grandfather," sighed Sophy, "what are you about? We shall be ruined — you too, who are so careful not to get into debt. And what have we left to pay the people here?"

"Sir Isaac! and this!" returned the Comedian, touching his forehead. "Do not alarm yourself — stay here and repose — and don't let Sir Isaac out of the room on any account!"

He took off his hat, brushed the nap carefully with his sleeve, replaced it on his head — not jauntily aside — not like a *jeune premier*, but with equilateral brims, and in composed fashion, like a *père noble* — then, making a sign to Sir Isaac to rest quiet, he passed to the door; there he halted, and turning towards Sophy, and meeting her wistful eyes, his own eye moistened.

"Ah!" he murmured, "heaven grant I may succeed now, for if I do, then you shall indeed be a little lady!"

He was gone.

CHAPTER X.

Showing with what success Gentleman Waife assumes the pleasing part of Friend to the Enlightenment of the Age and the Progress of the People.

On the landing-place, Waife encountered the Irish porter, who, having left the bundle in the drawing-room, was waiting patiently to be paid for his trouble.

The Comedian surveyed the good-humoured shrewd face, on every line of which was writ the golden maxim, "Take things asy." "I beg your pardon, my friend; I had almost forgotten you. Have you been long in this town?"

"Four years — and long life to your honour!"

"Do you know Mr. Hartopp, the Mayor?"

"Is it his worship the Mayor? Sure and it is the Mayor as has made a man o' Mike Callaghan."

The Comedian evinced urbane curiosity to learn the history of that process, and drew forth a grateful tale. Four summers ago Mike had resigned the "first gem of the sea" in order to assist in making hay for a Saxon taskmaster. Mr. Hartopp, who farmed largely, had employed him in that rural occupation. Seized by a

malignant fever, Mr. Hartopp had helped him through it, and naturally conceived a liking for the man he helped. Thus, as Mike became convalescent, instead of passing the poor man back to his own country, which at that time gave little employment to the surplus of its agrarian population beyond an occasional shot at a parson, an employment, though animated, not lucrative, he exercised Mike's returning strength upon a few light jobs in his warehouse; and finally, Mike marrying imprudently the daughter of a Gatesboro' operative, Mr. Hartopp set him up in life as a professional messenger and porter, patronised by the corporation. The narrative made it evident that Mr. Hartopp was a kind and worthy man, and the Comedian's heart warmed towards him.

"An honour to our species, this Mr. Hartopp!" said Waife, striking his staff upon the floor; "I covet his acquaintance. Would he see you if you called at his counting-house?"

Mike replied in the affirmative with eager pride, "Mr. Hartopp would see him at once. Sure, did not the Mayor know that time was money? Mr. Hartopp was not a man to keep the poor waiting."

"Go down and stay outside the hall door; you shall take a note for me to the Mayor."

Waife then passed into the bar, and begged the favour of a sheet of note-paper. The landlady seated him at her own desk — and thus wrote the Comedian:—

“Mr. Chapman presents his compliments to the Mayor of Gatesboro’, and requests the honour of a very short interview. Mr. Chapman’s deep interest in the permanent success of those literary institutes which are so distinguished a feature of this enlightened age, and Mr. Mayor’s wellknown zeal in the promotion of those invaluable societies, must be Mr. Chapman’s excuse for the liberty he ventures to take in this request. Mr. C. may add that of late he has earnestly directed his attention to the best means of extracting new uses from those noble but undeveloped institutions. — *Saracen’s Head, &c.*”

This epistle, duly sealed and addressed, Waife delivered to the care of Mike Callaghan — and simultaneously he astounded that functionary with no less a gratuity than half-a-crown. Cutting short the fervent blessings which this generous donation naturally called forth, the Comedian said, with his happiest combination of suavity and loftiness, “And should the Mayor ask you what sort of person I am — for I have not the honour to be known to him, and there are so many adventurers about, that he might reasonably expect me to be one — perhaps you can say that I don’t look like a person he need be afraid to admit. You know a gentleman by sight! Bring back an answer as soon as may be; perhaps I shan’t stay long in the town. You will find me in the High Street, looking at the shops.”

The porter took to his legs — impatient to vent his overflowing heart upon the praises of this munificent stranger. A gentleman, indeed — Mike should think so. If Mike's good word with the Mayor was worth money, Gentleman Waife had put his half-crown out upon famous interest.

The Comedian strolled along the High Street, and stopped before a stationer's shop, at the window of which was displayed a bill, entitled —

GATESBORO' ATHENÆUM AND LITERARY INSTITUTE.

LECTURE ON CONCHOLOGY,

By PROFESSOR LONG,

Author of "Researches into the Natural History of Limpets."

Waife entered the shop, and lifted his hat, —
"Permit me, sir, to look at that hand-bill."

"Certainly, sir; but the lecture is over — you can see by the date; it came off last week. We allow the bills of previous proceedings at our Athenæum to be exposed at the window till the new bills are prepared — keeps the whole thing alive, sir."

"Conchology," said the Comedian, "is a subject which requires deep research, and on which a learned man may say much without fear of contradiction. But how far is Gatesboro' from the British Ocean?"

"I don't know exactly, sir — a long way."

"Then, as shells are not familiar to the youthful remembrances of your fellow-townsmen, possibly the lecturer may have found an audience rather select than numerous."

"It was a very attentive audience, sir — and highly respectable — Miss Grieve's young ladies (the genteelest seminary in the town) attended."

WIFE. — "Highly creditable to the young ladies. But, pardon me, is your Athenæum a *Mechanics'* Institute?"

SHOPMAN. — "It was so called at first. But, somehow or other, the mere operatives fell off, and it was thought advisable to change the word '*Mechanics*' into the word '*Literary*.' Gatesboro' is not a manufacturing town, and the mechanics here do not realise the expectations of that taste for abstract science on which the originators of these societies founded their —"

WIFE (insinuatingly interrupting). — "Their calculations of intellectual progress and their tables of pecuniary return. Few of these societies, I am told, are really self-supporting — I suppose Professor Long is! — and if he resides in Gatesboro', and writes on limpets, he is probably a man of independent fortune."

SHOPMAN. — "Why, sir, the professor was engaged from London — five guineas and his travelling expenses. The funds of the society could ill afford such outlay; but we have a most worthy Mayor, who, as-

sisted by his foreman, Mr. Williams, our treasurer, is, I may say, the life and soul of the institute."

"A literary man himself, your Mayor?"

The shopman smiled. "Not much in that way, sir; but anything to enlighten the working classes. This is Professor Long's great work upon limpets, 2 vols., post octavo. The Mayor has just presented it to the library of the Institute. I was cutting the leaves when you came in."

"Very prudent in you, sir. If limpets were but able to read printed character in the English tongue, this work would have more interest for them than the ablest investigations upon the political and social history of man. But," added the Comedian, shaking his head mournfully, "the human species is not testaceous — and what the history of man might be to a limpet, the history of limpets is to a man." So saying, Mr. Waife bought a sheet of cardboard and some gilt foil, relifted his hat, and walked out.

The shopman scratched his head thoughtfully; he glanced from his window at the form of the receding stranger, and mechanically resumed the task of cutting those leaves, which, had the volumes reached the shelves of the library uncut, would have so remained to the crack of doom.

Mike Callaghan now came in sight, striding fast. "Mr. Mayor sends his love — bother-o'-me — his respex; and will be happy to see your honour."

In three minutes more the Comedian was seated in a little parlour that adjoined Mr. Hartopp's counting-house — Mr. Hartopp seated also, *vis-à-vis*. The Mayor had one of those countenances upon which good-nature throws a sunshine softer than Claude ever shed upon canvass. Josiah Hartopp had risen in life by little other art than that of quiet kindliness. As a boy at school, he had been ever ready to do a good turn to his schoolfellows; and his schoolfellows at last formed themselves into a kind of police, for the purpose of protecting Jos. Hartopp's pence and person from the fists and fingers of each other. He was evidently so anxious to please his master, not from fear of the rod, but the desire to spare that worthy man the pain of inflicting it, that he had more trouble taken with his education than was bestowed on the brightest intellect that school ever reared; and where other boys were roughly flogged, Jos. Hartopp was soothingly patted on the head, and told not to be cast down, but try again. The same even-handed justice returned the sugared chalice to his lips in his apprenticeship to an austere leather-seller, who, not bearing the thought to lose sight of so mild a face, raised him into partnership, and ultimately made him his son-in-law and residuary legatee. Then Mr. Hartopp yielded to the advice of friends who desired his exaltation, and from a leather-seller became a tanner. Hides themselves softened their asperity to that gentle dealer, and melted into

golden fleeces. He became rich enough to hire a farm for health and recreation. He knew little of husbandry, but he won the heart of a bailiff who might have reared a turnip from a deal table. Gradually the farm became his fee-simple, and the farmhouse expanded into a villa. Wealth and honours flowed in from a brimmed horn. The surliest man in the town would have been ashamed of saying a rude thing to Jos. Hartopp. If he spoke in public, though he hummed and hawed lamentably, no one was so respectfully listened to. As for the parliamentary representation of the town, he could have returned himself for one seat and Mike Callaghan for the other, had he been so disposed. But he was too full of the milk of humanity to admit into his veins a drop from the gall of party. He suffered others to legislate for his native land, and (except on one occasion, when he had been persuaded to assist in canvassing, not indeed the electors of Gatesboro', but those of a distant town, in which he possessed some influence, on behalf of a certain eminent orator) Jos. Hartopp was only visible in politics whenever Parliament was to be petitioned in favour of some humane measure, or against a tax that would have harassed the poor.

If anything went wrong with him in his business, the whole town combined to set it right for him. Was a child born to him, Gatesboro' rejoiced as a mother. Did measles or scarlatina afflict his neighbourhood, the

first anxiety of Gatesboro' was for Mr. Hartopp's nursery. No one would have said Mrs. Hartopp's nursery; and when in such a department the man's name supersedes the woman's, can more be said in proof of the tenderness he excites? In short, Jos. Hartopp was a notable instance of a truth not commonly recognised, viz. that affection is power, and that, if you do make it thoroughly and unequivocally clear that you love your neighbours, though it may not be quite so well as you love yourself, — still cordially and disinterestedly, you will find your neighbours much better fellows than Mrs. Grundy gives them credit for, — but always provided that your talents be not such as to excite their envy, nor your opinions such as to offend their prejudices.

MR. HARTOPP. — “You take an interest, you say, in literary institutes, and have studied the subject?”

THE COMEDIAN. — “Of late, those institutes have occupied my thoughts as presenting the readiest means of collecting liberal ideas into a profitable focus.”

MR. HARTOPP. — “Certainly it is a great thing to bring classes together in friendly union.”

THE COMEDIAN. — “For laudable objects.”

MR. HARTOPP. — “To cultivate their understandings.”

THE COMEDIAN. — “To warm their hearts.”

MR. HARTOPP. — “To give them useful knowledge.”

THE COMEDIAN. — "And pleasurable sensations."

MR. HARTOPP. — "In a word, to instruct them."

THE COMEDIAN. — "And to amuse."

"Eh!" said the Mayor — "amuse!"

Now, every one about the person of this amiable man was on the constant guard to save him from the injurious effects of his own benevolence; and accordingly his foreman, hearing that he was closeted with a stranger, took alarm, and entered on pretence of asking instructions about an order for hides, — in reality, to glower upon the intruder, and keep his master's hands out of imprudent pockets.

Mr. Hartopp, who, though not brilliant, did not want for sense, and was a keener observer than was generally supposed, divined the kindly intentions of his assistant. "A gentleman interested in the Gatesboro' Athenæum. My foreman, sir — Mr. Williams, the treasurer of our Institute. Take a chair, Williams."

"You said to amuse, Mr. Chapman, but —"

"You did not find Professor Long on conchology amusing?"

"Why," said the Mayor, smiling blandly, "I myself am not a man of science, and therefore his lecture, though profound, was a little dry to me."

"Must it not have been still more dry to your workmen, Mr. Mayor?"

"They did not attend," said Williams. "Up-hill task we have to secure the Gatesboro' mechanics, when

anything really solid is to be addressed to their understandings."

"Poor things, they are so tired at night," said the Mayor compassionately; "but they wish to improve themselves, and they take books from the library."

"Novels," quoth the stern Williams, — "it will be long before they take out that valuable 'History of Limpets.'"

"If a lecture was as amusing as a novel, would not they attend it?" asked the Comedian.

"I suppose they would," returned Mr. Williams. "But our object is to instruct; and instruction, sir —"

"Could be made amusing. If, for instance, the lecturer could produce a live shell-fish, and, by showing what kindness can do towards developing intellect and affection in beings without soul, — make man himself more kind to his fellowman?"

Mr. Williams laughed grimly. — "Well, sir?"

"This is what I should propose to do."

"With a shell-fish!" cried the Mayor.

"No, sir; with a creature of nobler attributes —
A DOG!"

The listeners stared at each other like dumb animals as Waife continued —

"By winning interest for the individuality of a gifted quadruped, I should gradually create interest in

the natural history of its species. I should lead the audience on to listen to comparisons with other members of the great family which once associated with Adam. I should lay the foundation for an instructive course of natural history, and from vertebrated mammals who knows but we might gradually arrive at the nervous system of the molluscous division, and produce a sensation by the production of a limpet!"

"Theoretical," said Mr. Williams.

"Practical, sir; since I take it for granted that the Athenæum, at present, is rather a tax upon the richer subscribers, including Mr. Mayor."

"Nothing to speak of," said the mild Hartopp. Williams looked towards his master with unspeakable love, and groaned. "Nothing indeed — oh!"

"These societies should be wholly self-supporting," said the Comedian, "and inflict no pecuniary loss upon Mr. Mayor."

"Certainly," said Williams, "that is the right principle. Mr. Mayor should be protected."

"And if I show you how to make these societies self-supporting —"

"We should be very much obliged to you."

"I propose, then, to give an exhibition at your rooms."

Mr. Williams nudged the Mayor, and coughed, the Comedian not appearing to remark cough or nudge.

"Of course gratuitously. I am not a professional lecturer, gentlemen."

Mr. Williams looked charmed to hear it.

"And when I have made my first effort successful, as I feel sure it will be, I will leave it to you, gentlemen, to continue my undertaking. But I cannot stay long here. If the day after to-morrow —"

"That is our ordinary *soirée* night," said the Mayor. "But you said a dog, sir — dogs not admitted — Eh, Williams?"

MR. WILLIAMS. — "A mere by-law, which the sub-committee can suspend if necessary. But would not the introduction of a live animal be less dignified than —"

"A dead failure," put in the Comedian gravely. The Mayor would have smiled, but he was afraid of doing so lest it might hurt the feelings of Mr. Williams, who did not seem to take the joke.

"We are a purely intellectual body," said that latter gentleman, "and a dog —"

"A learned dog, I presume?" observed the Mayor.

MR. WILLIAMS (nodding). — "Might form a dangerous precedent for the introduction of other quadrupeds. We might thus descend even to the level of a learned pig. We are not a menagerie, Mr. — Mr. —"

"Chapman," said the Mayor urbanely.

“Enough,” said the Comedian, rising, with his grand air: “if I considered myself at liberty, gentlemen, to say who and what I am, you would be sure that I am not trifling with what *I* consider a very grave and important subject. As to suggesting anything derogatory to the dignity of science, and the eminent repute of the Gatesboro’ Athenæum, it would be idle to vindicate myself. These grey hairs are —”

He did not conclude that sentence, save by a slight waive of the hand. The two burgesses bowed reverentially, and the Comedian went on —

“But when you speak of precedent, Mr. Williams, allow me to refer you to precedents in point. Aristotle wrote to Alexander the Great for animals to exhibit to the Literary Institute of Athens. At the colleges in Egypt lectures were delivered on a dog called Anubis, as inferior, I boldly assert, to that dog which I have referred to, as an Egyptian College to a British Institute. The ancient Etrurians, as is shown by the erudite Schweighæuser, in that passage — you understand Greek, I presume, Mr. Williams?”

Mr. Williams could not say he did.

THE COMEDIAN. — “Then I will not quote that passage in Schweighæuser upon the Molossian dogs in general, and the dog of Alcibiades in particular. But it proves beyond a doubt that, in every ancient literary

institute, learned dogs were highly estimated; and there was even a philosophical academy called the Cynic — that is, Doggish, or Dog-school, of which Diogenes was the most eminent professor. He, you know, went about with a lanthorn looking for an honest man, and could not find one! Why? Because the Society of Dogs had raised his standard of human honesty to an impracticable height. But I weary you; otherwise I could lecture on in this way for the hour together, if you think the Gatesboro' operatives prefer erudition to amusement."

"A great scholar," whispered Mr. Williams. — Aloud; "and I've nothing to say against your precedents, sir. I think you have made out that part of the case. But, after all, a learned dog is not so very uncommon as to be in itself the striking attraction which you appear to suppose."

"It is not the mere learning of my dog of which I boast," replied the Comedian. "Dogs may be learned, and men too; but it is the way that learning is imparted, whether by dog or man, for the edification of the masses, in order, as Pope expresses himself, 'to raise the genius and to mend the heart,' that alone adorns the possessor, exalts the species, interests the public, and commands the respect of such judges as I see before me." The grand bow.

"Ah!" said Mr. Williams, hesitatingly, "sentiments

that do honour to your head and heart; and if we could, in the first instance, just see the dog privately."

"Nothing easier!" said the Comedian. "Will you do me the honour to meet him at tea this evening?"

"Rather will you not come and take tea at my house?" said the Mayor, with a shy glance towards Mr. Williams.

THE COMEDIAN. — "You are very kind; but my time is so occupied that I have long since made it a rule to decline all private invitations out of my own home. At my years, Mr. Mayor, one may be excused for taking leave of society and its forms; but you are comparatively young men. I presume on the authority of these grey hairs, and I shall expect you this evening — say at nine o'clock." The Actor waved his hand graciously and withdrew.

"A scholar AND a gentleman," said Williams, emphatically. And the Mayor, thus authorised to allow vent to his kindly heart, added, "A humourist, and a pleasant one. Perhaps he is right, and our poor operatives would thank us more for a little innocent amusement than for those lectures, which they may be excused for thinking rather dull, since even you fell asleep when Professor Long got into the multilocular shell of the very first class of cephalous mollusca; and it is my belief that harmless laughter has a moral effect upon

the working class -- only don't spread it about that I said so, for we know excellent persons, of a serious turn of mind, whose opinions that sentiment might shock."

CHAPTER XI.

HISTORICAL PROBLEM: "Is Gentleman Waife a swindler or a man of genius?" ANSWER — "Certainly a swindler, if he don't succeed." Julius Cæsar owed two millions when he risked the experiment of being general in Gaul. If Julius Cæsar had not lived to cross the Rubicon and pay off his debts, what would his creditors have called Julius Cæsar?

I need not say that Mr. Hartopp and his foreman came duly to tea, but the Comedian exhibited Sir Isaac's talents very sparingly — just enough to excite admiration without sating curiosity. Sophy, whose pretty face and well-bred air were not unappreciated, was dismissed early to bed by a sign from her grandfather, and the Comedian then exerted his powers to entertain his visitors, so that even Sir Isaac was soon forgotten. Hard task, by writing, to convey a fair idea of this singular vagrant's pleasant vein. It was not so much what he said as the way of saying it, which gave to his desultory talk the charm of humour. He had certainly seen an immense deal of life somehow or other; and without appearing at the time to profit

much by observation, without perhaps being himself conscious that he did profit, there was something in the very *enfantillage* of his loosest prattle, by which, with a glance of the one lustrous eye, and a twist of the mobile lip, he could convey the impression of an original genius playing with this round world of ours — tossing it up, catching it again — easily as a child plays with its particoloured ball. His mere book-knowledge was not much to boast of, though early in life he must have received a fair education. He had a smattering of the ancient classics, sufficient, perhaps, to startle the unlearned. If he had not read them, he had read about them; and at various odds and ends of his life he had picked up acquaintance with the popular standard modern writers. But literature with him was the smallest stripe in the particoloured ball. Still it was astonishing how far and wide the Comedian could spread the sands of lore that the winds had drifted round the door of his playful busy intellect. Where, for instance, could he ever have studied the nature and prospects of Mechanics' Institutes? and yet how well he seemed to understand them. Here, perhaps, his experience in one kind of audience helped him to the key to all miscellaneous assemblages. In fine, the man was an actor; and if he had thought fit to act the part of Professor Long himself, he would have done it to the life.

The two burghers had not spent so pleasant an

evening for many years. As the clock struck twelve, the Mayor, whose gig had been in waiting a whole hour to take him to his villa, rose reluctantly to depart.

"And," said Williams, "the bills must be out to-morrow. What shall we advertise?"

"The simpler the better," said Waife; "only pray head the performance with the assurance that it is under the special patronage of his worship the Mayor."

The Mayor felt his breast swell as if he had received some overwhelming personal obligation.

"Suppose it run thus," continued the Comedian —

"Illustrations from Domestic Life and Natural History, with LIFE examples, PART 1ST — THE DOG!"

"It will take," said the Mayor; "dogs are such popular animals!"

"Yes," said Williams; "and though for that very reason some might think that by the 'live example of a dog' we compromised the dignity of the Institute — still the importance of Natural History —"

"And," added the Comedian, "the sanctifying influences of domestic life —"

"May," concluded Mr. Williams, "carry off whatever may seem to the higher order of minds a too familiar attraction in the — dog!"

"I do not fear the result," said Waife, "provided the audience be sufficiently numerous; for that (which is an indispensable condition to a fair experiment),

I issue hand-bills — only where distributed by the Mayor."

"Don't be too sanguine. I distributed bills on behalf of Professor Long, and the audience was not numerous. However, I will do my best. Is there nothing more in which I can be of use to you, Mr. Chapman?"

"Yes, later." Williams took alarm and approached the Mayor's breastpocket protectingly. The Comedian drew him aside and whispered, "I intend to give the Mayor a little outline of the exhibition, and bring him into it, in order that his fellow townsmen may signify their regard for him by a cheer; it will please his good heart and be touching, you'll see — mum!" Williams shook the Comedian by the hand, relieved, affected, and confiding.

The visitors departed; and the Comedian lighted his hand-candlestick, whistled to Sir Isaac, and went to bed without one compunctious thought upon the growth of his bill and the deficit in his pockets. And yet it was true, as Sophy implied, that the Comedian had an honest horror of incurring debt. He generally thought twice before he risked owing even the most trifling bill; and when the bill came in, if it left him penniless, it was paid. And now, what reckless extravagance? The best apartments! dinners — tea — in the first hotel of the town! half-a-crown to a porter! That lavish mode of life renewed with the dawning sun! —

not a care for the morrow; and I dare not conjecture how few the shillings in that purse. What aggravation, too, of guilt! Bills incurred without means under a borrowed name! I don't pretend to be a lawyer; but it looks to me very much like swindling. Yet the wretch sleeps. But are we sure that we are not shallow moralists? Do we carry into account the right of genius to draw bills upon the Future? Does not the most prudent general sometimes burn his ships? Does not the most upright merchant sometimes take credit on the chance of his ventures? May not that peaceful slumberer be morally sure that he has that argosy afloat in his own head, which amply justifies his use of "the Saracen's?" If his plan should fail? He will tell you that is impossible! But if it *should* fail, you say. Listen; there runs a story — (I don't vouch for its truth. I tell it as it was told to me) — there runs a story, that in the late Russian war a certain naval veteran, renowned for professional daring and scientific invention, was examined before some great officials as to the chances of taking Cronstadt. "If you send *me*," said the admiral, "with so many ships of the line, and so many gunboats, Cronstadt, of course, will be taken." "But," said a prudent lord, "suppose it should not be taken?" "That is impossible — it must be taken!" "Yes," persisted my lord, "you think so, no doubt; but still, if it should not be taken — what then?" "What then! — why, there's an end

of the British fleet!" The great men took alarm, and that admiral was not sent. But they misconstrued the meaning of his answer. He meant not to imply any considerable danger to the British fleet. He meant to prove that one hypothesis was impossible by the suggestion of a counter impossibility more self-evident. "It is impossible but what I shall take Cronstadt!" "But if you don't take it?" "It is impossible but what I shall take it; for if I don't take it, there's an end of the British fleet; and as it is impossible that there should be an end of the British fleet, it is impossible that I should not take Cronstadt!" — Q.E.D.

CHAPTER XII.

In which everything depends on Sir Isaac's success in discovering the Law of Attraction.

On the appointed evening, at eight o'clock, the great room of the Gatesboro' Athenæum was unusually well filled. Not only had the Mayor exerted himself to the utmost for that object, but the hand-bill itself promised a rare relief from the prosiness of abstract enlightenment and elevated knowledge. Moreover, the stranger himself had begun to excite speculation and curiosity. He was an amateur, not a cut-and-dry professor. The Mayor and Mr. Williams had both spread the report that there was more in him than appeared on the surface: prodigiously learned, but extremely agreeable — fine manners too! — Who could he be? Was Chapman his real name? &c. &c.

The Comedian had obtained permission to arrange the room beforehand. He had the raised portion of it for his stage, and he had been fortunate enough to find a green curtain to be drawn across it. From behind this screen he now emerged, and bowed. The

bow redoubled the first conventional applause. He then began a very short address — extremely well delivered, as you may suppose, but rather in the conversational than the oratorical style. He said it was his object to exhibit the intelligence of that Universal friend of Man — the Dog, in some manner appropriate, not only to its sagacious instincts, but to its affectionate nature, and to convey thereby the moral that talents, however great, learning, however deep, were of no avail, unless rendered serviceable to Man. (Applause.) He must be pardoned then, if, in order to effect this object, he was compelled to borrow some harmless effects from the stage. In a word, his Dog would represent to them the plot of a little drama. And he, though he could not say that he was altogether unaccustomed to public speaking (here a smile, modest, but as august as that of some famous parliamentary orator who makes his first appearance at a vestry), still wholly new to its practice in the special part he had undertaken, would rely on their indulgence to efforts aspiring to no other merit than that of aiding the Hero of the piece in familiar illustration of those qualities in which Dogs might give a lesson to Humanity. Again he bowed, and retired behind the curtain. A pause of three minutes; — the curtain drew up. Could that be the same Mr. Chapman whom the spectators beheld before them? Could three minutes suffice to change the sleek, respectable, prosperous-looking gentleman who

had just addressed them, into that image of threadbare poverty and hunger-pinched dejection? Little aid from theatrical costume: the clothes seemed the same, only to have grown wondrous aged and rusty. The face, the figure, the man — *these* had undergone a transmutation beyond the art of the mere stage wardrobe, be it ever so amply stored, to effect. But for the patch over the eye you could not have recognised Mr. Chapman. There was, indeed, about him, still, an air of dignity; but it was the dignity of woe — a dignity, too, not of an affable civilian, but of some veteran soldier. You could not mistake. Though not in uniform, the melancholy man must have been a warrior! The way the coat was buttoned across the chest, the black stock tightened round the throat, the shoulders thrown back in the disciplined habit of a life, though the head bent forward in the despondency of an eventful crisis; — all spoke the decayed, but not ignoble, hero of a hundred fields.

There was something foreign, too, about the veteran's air. Mr. Chapman had looked so thoroughly English — that tragical and meagre personage, which had exfoliated an arid stem from Mr. Chapman's buxom leaves, looked so unequivocally French. Not a word had the Comedian yet said; and yet all this had the first sight of him conveyed to the audience. There was an amazed murmur, then breathless stillness. The story rapidly unfolded itself, partly by words, much more

by look and action. There sate a soldier who had fought under Napoleon at Marengo and Austerlitz, gone through the snows of Muscovy, escaped the fires of Waterloo — the soldier of the Empire! Wondrous ideal of a wondrous time! and nowhere winning more respect and awe than in that land of the old English foe, in which, with slight knowledge of the Beautiful in Art, there is so reverent a sympathy for all that is grand in Man! There sate the soldier, penniless and friendless — there, scarcely seen, reclined his grandchild, weak and slowly dying for the want of food; and all that the soldier possesses wherewith to buy bread for the day, is his cross of the Legion of Honour. It was given to him by the hand of the Emperor — must he pawn or sell it? Out on the pomp of decoration which we have substituted for the voice of passionate nature, on our fallen stage! Scenes so faithful to the shaft of a column — dresses by which an antiquary can define a date to a year! Is delusion there? Is it thus we are snatched from Thebes to Athens? No; — place a really fine actor on a deal board, and for Thebes and Athens you may hang up a blanket! Why, that very cross which the old soldier holds — away from his sight — in that tremulous hand, is but patched up from the foil and card-board bought at the stationer's shop. You might see it was nothing more, if you tried to see. Did a soul present think of such minute investigation? Not one. In the actor's hand that trumpery became at once

the glorious thing by which Napoleon had planted the sentiment of knightly heroism in the men whom Danton would have launched upon earth ruthless and bestial, as galley-slaves that had burst their chain.

The badge, wrought from foil and card-board, took life and soul; it begot an interest, inspired a pathos, as much as if it had been made — oh! not of gold and gems, but of flesh and blood. And the simple broken words that the old Man addressed to it! The scenes, the fields, the hopes, the glories it conjured up! And now to be wrenched away — sold to supply Man's humblest, meanest wants — sold — the last symbol of such a past! It was indeed "*propter vitam vivendi perdere causas.*" He would have starved rather — but the Child? And then the child rose up and came into play. She would not suffer such a sacrifice — she was not hungry — she was not weak; and when voice failed her, she looked up into that iron face and smiled — nothing but a smile. Out came the pocket-handkerchiefs! The soldier seizes the cross, and turns away. It *shall* be sold! As he opens the door, a dog enters gravely — licks his hand, approaches the table, raises itself on its hind-legs, surveys the table dolefully, shakes its head, whines, comes to its master, pulls him by the skirt, looks into his face inquisitively.

What does all this mean? It soon comes out, and very naturally. The dog belonged to an old fellow-soldier, who had gone to the Isle of France to claim

his share in the inheritance of a brother who had settled and died there, and who, meanwhile, had confided it to the care of our veteran, who was then in comparatively easy circumstances, since ruined by the failure and fraud of a banker to whom he had intrusted his all; and his small pension, including the yearly sum to which his cross entitled him, had been forestalled and mortgaged to pay the petty debts which, relying on his dividend from the banker, he had innocently incurred. The dog's owner had been gone for months; his return might be daily expected. Meanwhile the dog was at the hearth, but the wolf at the door. Now, this sagacious animal had been taught to perform the duties of messenger and major-domo. At stated intervals, he applied to his master for *sous*, and brought back the supplies which the *sous* purchased. He now, as usual, came to the table for the accustomed coin — the last *sou* was gone — the dog's occupation was at an end. But could not the dog be sold? Impossible — it was the property of another — a sacred deposit; one would be as bad as the banker if one could apply to one's own necessities the property one held in trust. These little biographical particulars came out in that sort of bitter and pathetic humour which a study of Shakespeare, or the experience of actual life, had taught the Comedian to be a natural relief to an intense sorrow. The dog meanwhile aided the narrative by his by-play. Still intent upon the *sous*, he thrust his nose into his

master's pockets — he appealed touchingly to the child, and finally put back his head and vented his emotion in a lugubrious and elegiacal howl. Suddenly there is heard without the sound of a showman's tin trumpet! Whether the actor had got some obliging person to perform on that instrument, or whether, as more likely, it was but a trick of ventriloquism, we leave to conjecture. At that note, an idea seemed to seize the dog. He ran first to his master, who was on the threshold about to depart; pulled him back into the centre of the room; next he ran to the child, dragging her towards the same spot, though with great tenderness, and then, uttering a joyous bark, he raised himself on his hind-legs, and, with incomparable solemnity, performed a minuet step! The child catches the idea from the dog. "Was he not more worth seeing than the puppet-show in the streets? might not people give money to see him, and the old soldier still keep his cross? To-day there is a public fête in the gardens yonder; that showman must be going thither; why not go too?" What! he, the old soldier — he stoop to show off a dog! he! he! The dog looked at him deprecatingly, and stretched himself on the floor — lifeless!

Yes, that is the alternative — shall his child die too, and he be too proud to save her? Ah! and if the cross can be saved also! But pshaw! what did the dog know that people would care to see? Oh, much, much. When the child was alone and sad, it would come and

play with her. See these old dominoes! She ranged them on the floor, and the dog leapt up and came to prove his skill. Artfully, then, the Comedian had planned that the dog should make some sad mistakes, attended by some marvellous surprises. No, he would not do; yes, he would do. The audience took it seriously, and became intensely interested in the dog's success; so sorry for his blunders, so triumphant in his lucky hits. And then the child calmed the hasty irritable old man so sweetly, and corrected the dog so gently, and talked to the animal; told it how much they relied on it, and produced her infant alphabet, and spelt out "Save us." The dog looked at the letters meditatively, and henceforth it was evident that he took more pains. Better and better; he will do, he will do! The child shall not starve, the cross not be sold! Down drops the curtain. — End of Act I.

Act II. opens with a dialogue spoken off the stage. Invisible *dramatis personæ*, that subsist, with airy tongues, upon the mimetic art of the Comedian. You understand that there is a vehement dispute going on. The dog must not be admitted into a part of the gardens where a more refined and exclusive section of the company have hired seats, in order to contemplate, without sharing, the rude dances or jostling promenade of the promiscuous merry-makers. Much hubbub, much humour; some persons for the dog, some against him; privilege and decorum here, equality and fraternity

there. A Bonapartist colonel sees the cross on the soldier's breast, and, *mille tonnerres*, he settles the point. He pays for three reserved seats — one for the soldier, one for the child, and a third for the dog. The veteran enters; the child, not strong enough to have pushed through the crowd, raised on his shoulder, Rolla-like; the dog led by a string. He enters erect and warrior-like; his spirit has been roused by contest; his struggles have been crowned by victory. But (and here the art of the drama and the actor culminated towards the highest point) — but he now at once includes in the list of his *dramatis personæ* the whole of his Gatesboro' audience. *They are* that select company into which he has thus forced his way. As he sees them seated before him, so calm, orderly, and dignified, *mauvaise honte* steals over the breast more accustomed to front the cannon than the battery of ladies' eyes. He places the child in a chair, abashed and humbled; he drops into a seat beside her shrinkingly; and the dog, with more self-possession and sense of his own consequence, brushes with his paw some imaginary dust from a third chair, as in the superciliousness of the well-dressed, and then seats himself, and looks round with serene audacity.

The chairs were skilfully placed on one side of the stage, as close as possible to the front row of the audience. The soldier ventures a furtive glance along the lines, and then speaks to his grandchild in whispered,

bated breath: "Now they are there, what are they come for? To beg? He can never have the boldness to exhibit an animal for *sous* — impossible; no, no, let them slink back again and sell the cross." And the child whispers courage; bids him look again along the rows; those faces seem very kind. He again lifts his eyes, glances round, and with an extemporaneous tact that completed the illusion to which the audience were already gently lending themselves, made sundry complimentary comments on the different faces actually before him, selected most felicitously. The audience, taken by surprise, as some fair female, or kindly burgess, familiar to their associations, was thus pointed out to their applause, became heartily genial in their cheers and laughter. And the Comedian's face, unmoved by such demonstrations — so shy and sad — insinuated its pathos underneath cheer and laugh. You now learned through the child that a dance, on which the company had been supposed to be gazing, was concluded, and that they would not be displeased by an interval of some other diversion. Now was the time! The dog, as if to convey a sense of the prevalent ennui, yawned audibly, patted the child on the shoulder, and looked up in her face. "A game of dominoes," whispered the little girl. The dog gleefully grinned assent. Timidly she stole forth the old dominoes, and ranged them on the ground; on which she slipped from her chair; the dog slipped from his; they began to

play. The experiment was launched; the soldier saw that the curiosity of the company was excited — that the show would commence — the *sous* follow; and as if he at least would not openly shame his service and his Emperor, he turned aside, slid his hand to his breast, tore away his cross, and hid it. Scarce a murmured word accompanied the action — the acting said all; and a noble thrill ran through the audience. Oh, sublime art of the mime!

The Mayor sate very near where the child and dog were at play. The Comedian had (as he before implied he would do) discreetly prepared that gentleman for direct and personal appeal. The little girl turned her blue eyes innocently towards Mr. Hartopp, and said, "The dog beats me, sir; will you try what you can do?"

A roar, and universal clapping of hands, amidst which the worthy magistrate stepped on the stage. At the command of its young mistress, the dog made the magistrate a polite bow, and straight to the game went magistrate and dog. From that time the interest became, as it were, personal to all present. "Will you come, sir?" said the child to a young gentleman, who was straining his neck to see how the dominoes were played; "and observe that it is all fair. You too, sir?" to Mr. Williams. The Comedian stood beside the dog, whose movements he directed with undetected skill, while appearing only to fix his eyes on the ground in conscious abasement. Those on the rows from behind

now pressed forward; those in advance either came on the stage, or stood up intently contemplating. The Mayor was defeated, the crowd became too thick, and the caresses bestowed on the dog seemed to fatigue him. He rose and retreated to a corner haughtily. "Manners, sir," said the soldier; "it is not for the like of us to be proud; excuse him, ladies and gentlemen." — "He only wishes to please all," said the child deprecatingly. "Say how many would you have round us at a time, so that the rest may not be prevented seeing you?" She spread the multiplication figures before the dog; the dog put his paw on 10. "Astonishing!" said the Mayor.

"Will you choose them yourself, sir?"

The dog nodded, walked leisurely round, keeping one eye towards the one eye of his master, and selected ten persons, amongst whom were the Mayor, Mr. Williams, and three pretty young ladies, who had been induced to ascend the stage. The others were chosen no less judiciously.

The dog was then led artfully on from one accomplishment to another, much within the ordinary range which bounds the instruction of learned animals. He was asked to say how many ladies were on the stage; he spelt three. What were their names? "The Graces." Then he was asked who was the first magistrate in the town. The dog made a bow to the Mayor. "What had made that gentleman first magistrate?"

The dog looked to the alphabet, and spelt "Worth." "Were there any persons present more powerful than the Mayor?" The dog bowed to the three young ladies. "What made them more powerful?" The dog spelt "Beauty." When ended the applause these answers received, the dog went through the musket exercise with the soldier's staff; and as soon as he had performed that, he came to the business part of the exhibition, seized the hat which his master had dropped on the ground, and carried it round to each person on the stage. They looked at one another. "He is a poor soldier's dog," said the child, hiding her face. "No, no; a soldier cannot beg," cried the Comedian. The Mayor dropped a coin in the hat; others did the same, or affected to do it. The dog took the hat to his master, who waived him aside. There was a pause. The dog laid the hat softly at the soldier's feet, and looked up to the child beseechingly.

"What," asked she, raising her head proudly — "what secures WORTH and defends BEAUTY?" The dog took up the staff and shouldered it. "And to what can the soldier look for aid when he starves, and will not beg?" The dog seemed puzzled — the suspense was awful. "Good heavens," thought the Comedian, "if the brute should break down after all! — and when I took such care that the words should lie undisturbed right before his nose!" With a deep sigh the veteran started from his despondent attitude, and crept along

the floor as if for escape — so broken down, so crest-fallen. Every eye was on that heartbroken face and receding figure; and the eye of that heartbroken face was on the dog, and the foot of that receding figure seemed to tremble, recoil, start, as it passed by the alphabetical letters which still lay on the ground as last arranged. “Ah! to what should he look for aid?” repeated the grandchild, clasping her little hands. The dog had now caught the cue, and put his paw first upon “WORTH,” and then upon “BEAUTY.” “Worth!” cried the ladies — “Beauty!” exclaimed the Mayor. “Wonderful, wonderful!” “Take up the hat,” said the child, and turning to the Mayor — “Ah! tell him, sir, that what Worth and Beauty give to Valour in distress is not alms but tribute.”

The words were little better than a hack claptrap; but the sweet voice glided through the assembly, and found its way into every heart.

“Is it so?” asked the old soldier, as his hand hoveringly passed above the coins. “Upon my honour, it is, sir,” said the Mayor, with serious emphasis. The audience thought it the best speech he had ever made in his life, and cheered him till the roof rung again. “Oh! bread, bread, for you, darling!” cried the veteran, bowing his head over the child, and taking out his cross and kissing it with passion; “and the badge of honour still for me!”

While the audience was in the full depth of its emo-

tion, and generous tears in many an eye, Waife seized his moment, dropped the actor, and stepped forth to the front as the man — simple, quiet, earnest man — artless man!

“This is no mimic scene, ladies and gentlemen. It is a tale in real life that stands out before you. I am here to appeal to those hearts that are not vainly open to human sorrows. I plead for what I have represented: True, that the man who needs your aid is not one of that soldiery which devastated Europe. But he has fought in battles as severe, and been left by fortune to as stern a desolation. True, he is not a Frenchman: he is one of a land you will not love less than France, — it is your own. He, too, has a child whom he would save from famine. He, too, has nothing left to sell or to pawn for bread — except — oh, not this gilded badge, see, this is only foil and cardboard — except, I say, the thing itself, of which you respect even so poor a symbol — nothing left to sell or to pawn but Honour! For these I have pleaded this night as a showman; for these, less haughty than the Frenchman, I stretch my hands towards you without shame; for these I am a beggar.”

He was silent. The dog quietly took up the hat and approached the Mayor again. The Mayor extracted the half-crown he had previously deposited, and dropped into the hat two golden sovereigns. Who does not guess the rest? All crowded forward — youth and

age, man and woman. And most ardent of all were those whose life stands most close to vicissitude — most exposed to beggary — most sorely tried in the alternative between bread and honour. Not an operative there but spared his mite.

CHAPTER XIII.

Omne ignotum pro Magnifico — Rumour, knowing nothing of his antecedents, exalts Gentleman Waife into Don Magnifico.

THE Comedian and his two coadjutors were followed to the Saracen's Head Inn by a large crowd, but at respectful distance. Though I know few things less pleasing than to have been decoyed and entrapped into an unexpected demand upon one's purse — when one only counted, too, upon an agreeable evening — and hold, therefore, in just abhorrence the circulating plate which sometimes follows a popular oration, homily, or other eloquent appeal to British liberality; yet, I will venture to say, there was not a creature whom the Comedian had surprised into impulsive beneficence, who regretted his action, grudged its cost, or thought he had paid too dear for his entertainment. All had gone through a series of such pleasurable emotions, that all had, as it were, wished a vent for their gratitude — and when the vent was found, it became an additional pleasure. But, strange to say,

no one could satisfactorily explain to himself these two questions — for what, and to whom, had he given his money? It was not a general conjecture that the exhibitor wanted the money for his own uses. No, despite the evidence in favour of that idea, a person so respectable, so dignified — addressing them, too, with that noble assurance to which a man who begs for himself is not morally entitled — a person thus characterised must be some high-hearted philanthropist who condescended to display his powers at an institute purely intellectual, perhaps on behalf of an eminent but decayed author, whose name, from the respect due to letters, was delicately concealed. Mr. Williams, considered the hardest head and most practical man in the town, originated and maintained that hypothesis. Probably the stranger was an author himself — a great and affluent author. Had not great and affluent authors — men who are the boast of our time and land — acted, yea, on a common stage, and acted inimitably, too, on behalf of some lettered brother or literary object? Therefore in these guileless minds, with all the pecuniary advantages of extreme penury and forlorn position, the Comedian obtained the respect due to prosperous circumstances and high renown. But there was one universal wish expressed by all who had been present, as they took their way homeward — and that wish was to renew the pleasure they had experienced, even if they paid the same price for it.

Could not the long-closed theatre be reopened, and the great man be induced by philanthropic motives, and an assured sum, raised by voluntary subscriptions, to gratify the whole town, as he had gratified its selected intellect? Mr. Williams, in a state of charitable thaw, now softest of the soft, like most hard men when once softened, suggested this idea to the Mayor. The Mayor said, evasively, that he would think of it, and that he intended to pay his respects to Mr. Chapman before he returned home, that very night — it was proper. Mr. Williams and many others wished to accompany his worship. But the kind magistrate suggested that Mr. Chapman would be greatly fatigued; that the presence of many might seem more an intrusion than a compliment; that he, the Mayor, had better go alone, and at a somewhat later hour, when Mr. Chapman, though not retired to bed, might have had time for rest and refreshment. This delicate consideration had its weight; and the streets were thin when the Mayor's gig stopped, on its way villa-wards, at the Saracen's Head.

CHAPTER XIV.

It is the interval between our first repinings and our final resignation, in which, both with individuals and communities, is to be found all that makes a History worth telling. Ere yet we yearn for what is out of our reach, we are still in the cradle. When wearied out with our yearnings, Desire again falls asleep — we are on the deathbed.

SOPHY (leaning on her grandfather's arm as they ascend the stair of the Saracen's Head). — "But I am so tired, grandy — I'd rather go to bed at once, please!"

GENTLEMAN WAIFE. — "Surely you could take something to eat first — something nice, Miss Chapman? — (Whispering close) We can live in clover now" — a phrase which means (aloud to the landlady, who crossed the landing-place above) "grilled chicken and mushrooms for supper, ma'am! Why don't you smile, Sophy? Oh, darling, you are ill!"

"No, no, grandy, dear — only tired — let me go to bed. I shall be better to-morrow — I shall indeed!"

Waife looked fondly into her face, but his spirits were too much exhilarated to allow him to notice the unusual flush upon her cheek, except with admiration of the increased beauty which the heightened colour gave to her soft features.

“Well,” said he, “you *are* a pretty child! — a very pretty child — and you act wonderfully. You would make a fortune on the stage; but” —

SOPHY (eagerly). — “But — no, no, never! — not the stage!”

WAIFE. — “I don’t wish you to go on the stage, as you know. A private exhibition — like the one to-night, for instance — has (thrusting his hand into his pocket) much to recommend it.”

SOPHY (with a sigh). — “Thank Heaven! that is over now — and you’ll not be in want of money for a long, long time! Dear Sir Isaac!”

She began caressing Sir Isaac, who received her attentions with solemn pleasure. They were now in Sophy’s room; and Waife, after again pressing the child in vain to take some refreshment, bestowed on her his kiss and blessing, and whistled *Malbrook s’en va-t-en guerre* to Sir Isaac, who considering that melody an invitation to supper, licked his lips, and stalked forth, rejoicing, but decorous.

Left alone, the child breathed long and hard, pressing her hands to her bosom, and sunk wearily on the foot of the bed. There were no shutters to the

window, and the moonlight came in gently, stealing across that part of the wall and floor which the ray of the candle left in shade. The girl raised her eyes slowly towards the window — towards the glimpse of the blue sky, and the slanting lustre of the moon. There is a certain epoch in our childhood, when what is called the romance of sentiment first makes itself vaguely felt. And ever with the dawn of that sentiment, the moon and the stars take a strange and haunting fascination. Few persons in middle life — even though they be genuine poets — feel the peculiar spell in the severe stillness and mournful splendour of starry skies which impresses most of us, even though no poets at all, in that mystic age when childhood nearly touches upon youth, and turns an unquiet heart to those marvellous riddles within us and without, which we cease to conjecture when experience has taught us that they have no solution upon this side the grave. Lured by the light, the child rose softly, approached the window, and resting her upturned face upon both hands, gazed long into the heavens, communing evidently with herself, for her lips moved and murmured indistinctly. Slowly she retired from the casement, and again seated herself at the foot of the bed, disconsolate. And then her thoughts ran sowewhat thus, though she might not have shaped them exactly in the same words: “No! I cannot understand it. Why was I contented and happy before I knew *him*?”

Why did I see no harm, no shame in this way of life — not even on that stage with those people — until *he* said, ‘It was what he wished I had never stooped to.’ And grandfather says our paths are so different, they cannot cross each other again. There is a path of life, then, which I can never enter — there is a path on which I must always, always walk, always, always, always that path — no escape! Never to come into that other one where there is no disguise, no hiding, no false names — never, never!” — she started impatiently, and with a wild look — “It is killing me!”

Then, terrified by her own impetuosity, she threw herself on the bed, weeping low. Her heart had now gone back to her grandfather; it was smiting her for ingratitude to him. Could there be shame or wrong in what he asked — what he did? And was she to murmur if she aided him to exist? What was the opinion of a stranger boy, compared to the approving, sheltering love of her sole guardian and tried fostering friend? And could people choose their own callings and modes of life? If one road went this way, another that: and they on the one road were borne farther and farther away from those on the other — as that idea came, consolation stopped, and in her noiseless weeping there was a bitterness as of despair. But the tears ended by relieving the grief that caused them. Wearied out of conjecture and complaint, her mind relapsed into

the old native, childish submission. With a fervour in which there was self-reproach, she repeated her meek, nightly prayer, that God would bless her dear grandfather, and suffer her to be his comfort and support. Then mechanically she undressed, extinguished the candle, and crept into bed. The moonlight became bolder and bolder; it advanced up the floors, along the walls; now it floods her very pillow, and seems to her eyes to take a holy loving kindness, holier and more loving as the lids droop beneath it. A vague remembrance of some tale of "Guardian spirits," with which Waife had once charmed her wonder, stirred through her lulling thoughts, linking itself with the presence of that encircling moonlight. There! see the eye-lids are closed, no tear upon their fringe. See the dimples steal out as the sweet lips are parted. She sleeps, she dreams already! Where and what is the rude world of waking now? Are there *not* guardian spirits? Deride the question if thou wilt, stern man, the reasoning and self-reliant — but thou, O fair mother — who hast marked the strange happiness on the face of a child that has wept itself to sleep — what sayest *thou* to the soft tradition, which surely had its origin in the heart of the earliest mother?

CHAPTER XV.

There is no man so friendless but what he can find a friend sincere enough to tell him disagreeable truths.

Meanwhile the Comedian had made himself and Sir Isaac extremely comfortable. No unabstemious man by habit was Gentleman Waife. He could dine on a crust, and season it with mirth; and as for exciting drinks, there was a childlike innocence in his humour never known to a brain that has been washed in alcohol. But on this special occasion, Waife's heart was made so bounteous by the novel sense of prosperity, that it compelled him to treat himself. He did honour to the grilled chicken, to which he had vainly tempted Sophy. He ordered half a pint of port to be mulled into negus. He helped himself with a bow, as if himself were a guest, and nodded each time he took off his glass, as much as to say, "Your health, Mr. Waife!" He even offered a glass of the exhilarating draught to Sir Isaac, who, exceedingly offended retreated under the sofa, whence he peered forth through his deciduous ringlets, with brows knit in grave rebuke. Nor was it without deliberate caution — a whisker

first, and then a paw — that he emerged from his retreat, when a plate, heaped with the remains of the feast, was placed upon the hearth-rug.

The supper over, and the attendant gone, the negus still left, Waife lighted his pipe, and gazing on Sir Isaac, thus addressed that canine philosopher: "Illustrious member of the Quadrupedal Society of Friends to Man, and, as possessing those abilities for practical life which but few friends to man ever display in his service, promoted to high rank — Commissary General of the Victualling Department, and Chancellor of the Exchequer — I have the honour to inform you that a vote of thanks in your favour has been proposed in this House, and carried unanimously." Sir Isaac, looking shy, gave another lick to the plate, and wagged his tail. "It is true that thou wert once (shall I say it?) in fault at 'Beauty and Worth,' — thy memory deserted thee; thy peroration was on the verge of a break down; but 'Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit,' as the Latin grammar philosophically expresseth it. Mortals the wisest, not only on two legs, but even upon four, occasionally stumble. The greatest general, statesman, sage, is not he who commits no blunder, but he who best repairs a blunder, and converts it to success. This was thy merit and distinction! It hath never been mine! I recognise thy superior genius. I place in thee unqualified confidence; and consigning thee to the arms of Morpheus, since I

see that panegyric acts on thy nervous system as a salubrious soporific, I now move that this House do resolve itself into a Committee of Ways and Means for the Consideration of the Budget!"

Therewith, while Sir Isaac fell into a profound sleep, the Comedian deliberately emptied his pockets on the table; and arranging gold and silver before him, thrice carefully counted the total, and then divided it into sundry small heaps.

"That's for the bill," quoth he — "Civil List! — a large item. That's for Sophy, the darling! She shall have a teacher, and learn French — Education Grant. — Current expenses for the next fortnight; — Miscellaneous Estimates; tobacco — we'll call that Secret Service Money. Ah, scamp — vagrant, is not Heaven kind to thee at last? A few more such nights, and who knows but thine old age may have other roof than the workhouse? And Sophy? — Ah, what of her? Merciful Providence, spare my life till she has outgrown its uses!" A tear came to his eye; he brushed it away quickly, and recounting his money, hummed a joyous tune.

The door opened; Waife looked up in surprise, sweeping his hand over the coins, and restoring them to his pocket.

The Mayor entered.

As Mr. Hartopp walked slowly up the room, his eye fixed Waife's; and that eye was so searching,

though so mild, that the Comedian felt himself change colour. His gay spirits fell — falling lower and lower, the nearer the Mayor's step came to him; and when Hartopp, without speaking, took his hand — not in compliment — not in congratulation, but pressed it as if in deep compassion, still looking him full in the face, with those pitying, penetrating eyes, the Actor experienced a sort of shock, as if he were read through, despite all his histrionic disguises — read through to his heart's core; and, as silent as his visitor, sunk back on his chair — abashed — disconcerted.

MR. HARTOPP. — “Poor man!”

THE COMEDIAN (rousing himself with an effort, but still confused). — “Down, Sir Isaac, down! This visit, Mr. Mayor, is an honour which may well take a dog by surprise! Forgive him!”

MR. HARTOPP (patting Sir Isaac, who was inquisitively sniffing his garments, and drawing a chair close to the Actor, who thereon edged his own chair a little away — in vain; for, on that movement, Mr. Hartopp advanced in proportion). — “Your dog is a very admirable and clever animal; but in the exhibition of a learned dog, there is something which tends to sadden one. By what privations has he been forced out of his natural ways? By what fastings and severe usage have his instincts been distorted into tricks? Hunger is a stern teacher, Mr. Chapman; and to those whom

it teaches, we cannot always give praise unmixed with pity."

THE COMEDIAN (ill at ease under this allegorical tone, and surprised at a quicker intelligence in Mr. Hartopp than he had given that person credit for). — "You speak like an oracle, Mr. Mayor; but that dog, at least, has been mildly educated, and kindly used. Inborn genius, sir, will have its vent. Hum! a most intelligent audience honoured us to-night; and our best thanks are due to you."

MR. HARTOPP. — "Mr. Chapman, let us be frank with each other. I am not a clever man — perhaps a dull one. If I had set up for a clever man, I should not be where I am now. Hush! no compliments. But my life has brought me into frequent contact with those who suffer; and the dullest of us gain a certain sharpness in the matters to which our observation is habitually drawn. You took me in at first, it is true. I thought you were a philanthropical humourist, who might have crotchets, as many benevolent men, with time on their hands and money in their pockets, are apt to form. But when it came to the begging hat (I ask your pardon — don't let me offend you) — when it came to the begging hat, I recognised the man who wants philanthropy from others, and whose crotchets are to be regarded in a professional point of view. Sir, I have come here alone, because I alone perhaps see the case as it really is. Will you confide

in me; you may do it safely. To be plain, who and what are you?"

THE COMEDIAN (evasively). — "What do you take me for, Mr. Mayor? What can I be other than an itinerant showman, who has had resort to a harmless stratagem in order to obtain an audience, and create a surprise that might cover the naked audacity of the 'begging hat.'"

MR. HARTOPP (gravely). — "When a man of your ability and education is reduced to such stratagems, he must have committed some great faults. Pray Heaven it be no worse than faults!"

THE COMEDIAN (bitterly). — "That is always the way with the prosperous. Is a man unfortunate — they say, 'Why don't he help himself?' Does he try to help himself — they say, 'With so much ability, why does not he help himself better?' Ability and education! Snares and springes, Mr. Mayor! Ability and education! the two worst man-traps that a poor fellow can put his foot into! Aha! Did not you say, if you had set up to be clever, you would not be where you now are. A wise saying; I admire you for it. Well, well, I and my dog have amused your townsfolk; they have amply repaid us. We are public servants; according as we act in public — hiss us or applaud. Are we to submit to an inquisition into our private character? Are you to ask how many mutton bones has that dog stolen! how many cats has he

worried! or how many shirts has the showman in his wallet! how many debts has he left behind him! what is his rent-roll on earth, and his account with heaven! — go and put those questions to ministers, philosophers, generals, poets. When they have acknowledged your right to put them, come to me and the other dog!”

MR. HARTOPP (rising and drawing on his gloves,) — “I beg your pardon! I have done, sir. And yet I conceived an interest in you. It is because I have no talents myself that I admire those who have. I felt a mournful anxiety, too, for your poor little girl — so young, so engaging. And is it necessary that you should bring up that child in a course of life certainly equivocal, and to females dangerous?”

The Comedian lifted his eyes suddenly, and stared hard at the face of his visitor, and in that face there was so much of benevolent humanity — so much sweetness contending with authoritative rebuke — that the vagabond’s hardihood gave way; he struck his breast, and groaned aloud.

MR. HARTOPP (pressing on the advantage he had gained). — “And have you no alarm for her health? Do you not see how delicate she is? Do you not see that her very talent comes from her susceptibility to emotions, which must wear her away?”

WAIFE. — “No, no! stop, stop, stop! you terrify me, you break my heart. Man, man! it is all for her

that I toil, and show, and beg — if you call it begging. Do you think I care what becomes of this battered hulk? Not a straw. What am I to do? What! what! You tell me to confide in you — wherefore? How can you help me? Who can help me? Would you give me employment? What am I fit for? Nothing! You could find work and bread for an Irish labourer, nor ask who or what he was; but to a man who strays towards you, seemingly from that sphere in which, if Poverty enters, she drops a curtsy, and is called ‘genteel,’ you cry, ‘Hold, produce your passport; where are your credentials — references?’ I have none. I have slipped out of the world I once moved in. I can no more appeal to those I knew in it than if I had transmigrated from one of yon stars, and said ‘see *there* what I was once!’ Oh, but you do not think she looks ill! — do you? do you? Wretch that I am! And I thought to save her!”

The old man trembled from head to foot, and his cheek was as pale as ashes.

Again the good magistrate took his hand, but this time the clasp was encouraging. “Cheer up; where there is a will there is a way; you justify the opinion I formed in your favour, despite all circumstances to the contrary. When I asked you to confide in me, it was not from curiosity, but because I would serve you, if I can. Reflect on what I have said. True, you can know but little of me. Learn what is said of me

by my neighbours before you trust me further. For the rest, to-morrow you will have many proposals to renew your performance. Excuse me if I do not actively encourage it. I will not, at least, interfere to your detriment; but —”

“But,” exclaimed Waife, not much heeding this address — “but you think she looks ill? you think this is injuring her? you think I am murdering my grandchild — my angel of life, my all!”

“Not so; I spoke too bluntly. Yet still —”

“Yes, yes, yet still —”

“Still, if you love her so dearly, would you blunt her conscience and love of truth? Were you not an impostor to-night? Would you ask her to reverence, and imitate, and pray for an impostor?”

“I never saw it in that light!” faltered Waife, struck to the soul; “never, never, so help me Heaven!”

“I felt sure you did not,” said the Mayor; “you saw but the sport of the thing; you took to it as a schoolboy. I have known many such men, with high animal spirits like yours. Such men err thoughtlessly; but did they ever sin consciously, they could not keep those high spirits! Good night, Mr. Chapman, I shall hear from you again.”

The door closed on the form of the visitor; Waife's head sunk on his breast, and all the deep lines upon brow and cheek stood forth, records of mighty griefs

revived — a countenance so altered, now that its innocent arch play was gone, that you would not have known it. At length he rose very quietly, took up the candle, and stole into Sophy's room. Shading the light with careful hand, he looked on her face as she slept. The smile was still upon the parted lip — the child was still in the fairy land of dreams. But the cheek was thinner than it had been weeks ago, and the little hand that rested on the coverlid seemed wasted. Waife took that hand noiselessly into his own; it was hot and dry. He dropped it with a look of unutterable fear and anguish; and shaking his head piteously, stole back again. Seating himself by the table at which he had been caught counting his gains, he folded his arms, and rooted his gaze on the floor; and there, motionless, and as if in stupified suspense of thought itself, he sate till the dawn crept over the sky — till the sun shone into the windows. The dog, crouched at his feet, sometimes started up and whined as to attract his notice: he did not heed it. The clock struck six, the house began to stir. The chambermaid came into the room; Waife rose and took his hat, brushing its nap mechanically with his sleeve. "Who did you say was the best here?" he asked with a vacant smile, touching the chambermaid's arm.

"Sir! the best — what!"

"The best doctor, ma'am — none of your parish apothecaries — the best physician — Dr. Gill — did

you say Gill? Thank you; his address, High Street. Close by, ma'am." With his grand bow — such is habit! — Gentleman Waife smiled graciously, and left the room. Sir Isaac stretched himself, and followed.

CHAPTER XVI.

In every civilised society there is found a race of men who retain the instincts of the aboriginal cannibal, and live upon their fellow-men as a natural food. These interesting but formidable bipeds, having caught their victim, invariably select one part of his body on which to fasten their relentless grinders. The part thus selected is peculiarly susceptible, Providence having made it alive to the least nibble; it is situated just above the hip-joint, it is protected by a tegument of exquisite fibre, vulgarly called "THE BREECHES POCKET." The thoroughbred Anthropophagite usually begins with his own relations and friends; and so long as he confines his voracity to the domestic circle, the Laws interfere little, if at all, with his venerable propensities. But when he has exhausted all that allows itself to be edible in the bosom of private life, the Man-eater falls loose on Society, and takes to prowling — then "*Sauve qui peut!*" the Laws rouse themselves, put on their spectacles, call for their wigs and gowns, and the Anthropophagite, turned prowler is not always sure of his dinner. It is when he has arrived at this stage of development that the Man-eater becomes of importance, enters into the domain of History, and occupies the thoughts of Moralists.

On the same morning in which Waife thus went forth from the "Saracen's Head" in quest of the

doctor, but at a later hour, a man, who, to judge by the elaborate smartness of his attire, and the jaunty assurance of his saunter, must have wandered from the gay purlieus of Regent Street, threaded his way along the silent and desolate thoroughfares that intersect the remotest districts of Bloomsbury. He stopped at the turn into a small street still more sequestered than those which led to it, and looked up to the angle on the wall whereon the name of the street should have been inscribed. But the wall had been lately white-washed, and the whitewash had obliterated the expected epigraph. The man muttered an impatient execration; and turning round as if to seek a passenger of whom to make inquiry, beheld, on the opposite side of the way, another man apparently engaged in the same research. Involuntarily each crossed over the road towards the other.

“Pray, sir,” quoth the second wayfarer in that desert, “can you tell me if this is a street that is called a Place — Poddon Place, Upper?”

“Sir,” returned the sprucer wayfarer, “it is the question I would have asked of you.”

“Strange!”

“Very strange indeed that more than one person can, in this busy age, employ himself in discovering a Poddon Place! Not a soul to inquire of — not a shop that I see — not an orange stall!”

“Ha!” cried the other, in a hoarse sepulchral voice — “Ha! there is a pot-boy! Boy — boy — boy! I say; Hold, there! hold! Is this Poddon Place — Upper?”

“Yes, it be,” answered the pot-boy, with a sleepy air, caught in that sleepy atmosphere; and chiming his pewter against an area rail with a dull clang, he chanted forth “Pots oho!” with a note as dirge-like as that which in the City of the Plague chanted “Out with the dead!”

Meanwhile the two wayfarers exchanged bows and parted — the sprucer wayfarer, whether from the indulgence of a reflective mood, or from an habitual indifference to things and persons not concerning him, ceased to notice his fellow-solitary, and rather busied himself in sundry little coquetries appertaining to his own person. He passed his hand through his hair, rearranged the cock of his hat, looked complacently at his boots, which still retained the gloss of the morning’s varnish, drew down his wristbands, and, in a word, gave sign of a man who desires to make an effect, and feels that he ought to do it. So occupied was he in this self-commune, that when he stopped at length at one of the small doors in the small street, and lifted his hand to the knocker, he started to see that Wayfarer the Second was by his side.

The two men now examined each other briefly but deliberately. Wayfarer the First was still young —

certainly handsome, but with an indescribable look about the eye and lip, from which the other recoiled with an instinctive awe — a hard look, a cynical look — a sidelong, quiet, defying, remorseless look. His clothes were so new of gloss, that they seemed put on for the first time, were shaped to the prevailing fashion, and of a taste for colours less subdued than is usual with Englishmen, yet still such as a person of good mien could wear without incurring the charge of vulgarity, though liable to that of selfconceit. If you doubted that the man were a gentleman, you would have been puzzled to guess what else he could be. Were it not for the look we have mentioned, and which was perhaps not habitual, his appearance might have been called prepossessing. In his figure there was the grace, in his step the elasticity, which come from just proportions and muscular strength. In his hand he carried a supple switch stick, slight and innocuous to appearance, but weighted at the handle after the fashion of a life-preserver. The tone of his voice was not displeasing to the ear, though there might be something artificial in the swell of it — the sort of tone men assume when they desire to seem more frank and off-hand than belongs to their nature — a sort of rollicking tone which is to the voice what swagger is to the gait. Still that look! — it produced on you the effect which might be created by some strange animal, not without beauty, but deadly to man.

Wayfarer the Second was big and burly, middle-aged, large-whiskered, his complexion dirty. He wore a wig, — a wig evident, unmistakable — a wig curled and rusty — over the wig a dingy white hat. His black stock fitted tight round his throat, and across his breast he had thrown the folds of a Scotch plaid.

WAYFARER THE FIRST. — “You call here, too — on Mrs. Crane?”

WAYFARER THE SECOND. — “Mrs. Crane? — you too? Strange!”

WAYFARER THE FIRST (with constrained civility). — “Sir, I call on business — private business.”

WAYFARER THE SECOND (with candid surliness). — “So do I.”

WAYFARER THE FIRST. — “Oh!”

WAYFARER THE SECOND. — “Ha! the locks unbar!”

The door opened, and an old meagre woman-servant presented herself.

WAYFARER THE FIRST (gliding before the big man with a serpent’s undulating celerity of movement). — “Mrs. Crane lives here?” — “Yes.” “She’s at home, I suppose?” — “Yes!” “Take up my card; say I come alone — not with this gentleman.”

Wayfarer the Second seems to have been rather put out by the manner of his rival. He recedes a step.

“You know the lady of this mansion well, sir?”

“Extremely well.”

"Ha! then I yield you the precedence; I yield it, sir, but conditionally. You will not be long?"

"Not a moment longer than I can help; the land will be clear for you in an hour or less."

"Or less, so please you, let it be or less. Servant, sir."

"Sir, yours. — Come, my Hebe; track the dancers, that is, go up the stairs, and let me renew the dreams of youth in the eyes of Crane!"

The old woman, meanwhile, had been turning over the card in her withered palm, looking from the card to the visitor's face, and then to the card again, and mumbling to herself. At length she spoke:

"You, Mr. Losely — you! — Jasper Losely! how you be changed! what ha' ye done to yourself? where's your comeliness? where's the look that stole ladies' hearts? — you, Jasper Losely! you are his goblin!"

"Hold your peace, old hussey!" said the visitor, evidently annoyed at remarks so disparaging. "I am Jasper Losely, more bronzed of cheek, more iron of hand." He raised his switch with a threatening gesture, that might be in play, for the lips wore smiles, or might be in earnest, for the brows were bent; and pushing into the passage, and shutting the door, said — "Is your mistress up-stairs? show me to her room, or —". The old crone gave him one angry glance, which sunk frightened beneath the cruel gleam of his

eyes, and hastening up the stairs with a quicker stride than her age seemed to warrant, cried out — “Mistress, mistress! here is Mr. Losely! — Jasper Losely himself!” By the time the visitor had reached the landing-place of the first floor, a female form had emerged from a room above; — a female face peered over the banisters. Losely looked up and started as he saw it. A haggard face — the face of one over whose life there has passed a blight. When last seen by him it had possessed beauty, though of a masculine rather than womanly character. Now of that beauty not a trace! the cheeks sunken and hollow, left the nose sharp, long, beaked as a bird of prey. The hair, once glossy in its ebon hue, now grizzled, harsh, neglected, hung in tortured tangled meshes — a study for an artist who would paint a fury. But the eyes were bright — brighter than ever; bright now with a glare that lighted up the whole face bending over the man. In those burning eyes was there love? was there hate? was there welcome? was there menace? Impossible to distinguish, but at least one might perceive that there was joy.

“So,” said the voice from above, “so we do meet at last, Jasper Losely; you are come!”

Drawing a loose kind of dressing-robe more closely round her, the mistress of the house now descended the stairs — rapidly, flittingly, with a step noiseless as a spectre’s, and, grasping Losely firmly by the

hand, led him into a chill, dank, sunless drawing-room, gazing into his face fixedly all the while.

He winced and writhed. "There, there, let us sit down, my dear Mrs. Crane."

"And once I was called Bella."

"Ages ago! Basta! All things have their end. Do take those eyes of yours off my face; they were always so bright! — and — really now they are perfect burning-glasses! How close it is. Peuh! I am dead tired. May I ask for a glass of water — a drop of wine in it — or — brandy will do as well?"

"How! you have come to brandy, and morning drams — eh, Jasper?" said Mrs. Crane with a strange dreary accent. "I too once tried if fire could burn up thought, but it did not succeed with me; that is years ago; — and — there — see the bottles are full still!"

While thus speaking, she had unlocked a chiffonier of the shape usually found in "genteel lodgings," and taken out a leathern spirit-case containing four bottles, with a couple of wine-glasses. This case she placed on the table before Mr. Losely, and contemplated him at leisure while he helped himself to the raw spirits.

As she thus stood, an acute student of Lavater might have recognised, in her harsh and wasted countenance, signs of an original nature superior to that of her visitor; on her knitted brow, a sense higher in quality than on his smooth low forehead; on her straight stern lip, less cause for distrust than in the

false good-humour which curved his handsome mouth into that smile of the fickle, which, responding to mirth but not to affection, is often lighted and never warmed. It is true that in that set pressure of her lip there might be cruelty, and, still more, the secretiveness which can harbour deceit; and yet, by the nervous workings of that lip, when relieved from such pressure, you would judge the woman to be rather by natural temperament passionate and impulsive than systematically cruel or deliberately false — false or cruel only as some predominating passion became the soul's absolute tyrant and adopted the tyrant's vices. Above all, in those very lines destructive to beauty, that had been ploughed, not by time, over sallow cheeks, there was written the susceptibility to grief, to shame, to the sense of fall, which was not visible in the reflective reckless aspect of the sleek human animal before her.

In the room, too, there were some evidences of a cultivated taste. On the walls, book-shelves, containing volumes of a decorous and severe literature, such as careful parents allow to studious daughters — the stately masterpieces of Fénélon and Racine — selections, approved by boarding-schools, from Tasso, Dante, Metastasio; — amongst English authors, Addison, Johnson, Blair (his lectures as well as sermons) — elementary works on such sciences as admit female neophytes into their porticoes if not into their penetralia — botany, chemistry, astronomy. Prim as soldiers

on parade stood the books — not a gap in their ranks — evidently never now displaced for recreation — well bound, yet faded, dusty; — relics of a bygone life. Some of them might perhaps have been prizes at school, or birthday gifts from proud relations. There too, on the table, near the spirit-case, lay open a once handsome workbox — no silks now on the skeleton reels — discoloured, but not by use, in its nest of tarnished silk, slept the golden thimble. There too, in the corner, near a music-stand piled high with musical compositions of various schools and graduated complexity, from “lessons for beginners” to the most arduous gamut of a German oratorio, slunk pathetically a poor lute harp, the strings long since broken. There too, by the window, hung a wire bird-cage, the bird long since dead. In a word, round the woman gazing on Jasper Losely, as he complacently drank his brandy, grouped the forlorn tokens of an early state — the lost golden age of happy girlish studies, of harmless girlish tastes.

“*Basta — eno’*,” said Mr. Losely, pushing aside the glass which he had twice filled and twice drained — “to business. Let me see the child — I feel up to it now.”

A darker shade fell over Arabella Crane’s face as she said —

“The child — she is not here! I have disposed of her long ago.”

"Eh! — disposed of her! what do you mean?"

"Do you ask as if you feared I had put her out of the world? No! Well, then — you come to England to see the child? You miss — you love, the child of that — of that —". She paused, checked herself, and added in an altered voice — "of that honest, high-minded gentlewoman, whose memory must be so dear to me — you love that child; very natural, Jasper."

"Love her! a child I have scarcely seen since she was born! — do talk common sense. No. But have I not told you that she ought to be money's worth to me — ay, and she shall be yet, despite that proud man's disdainful insolence."

"That proud man — what, you have ventured to address him — visit him — since your return to England?"

"Of course. That's what brought me over. I imagined the man would rejoice at what I told him — open his purse-strings — lavish blessings and bank-notes. And the brute would not even believe me — all because" —

"Because you had sold the right to be believed before. I told you, when I took the child, that you would never succeed there — that I would never encourage you in the attempt. But you had sold the future, as you sold your past — too cheaply, it seems, Jasper."

"Too cheaply, indeed. Who could ever have sup-

posed that I should have been fobbed off with such a pittance?"

"Who, indeed, Jasper! You were made to spend fortunes, and call them pittances when spent, Jasper! You should have been a prince, Jasper — such princely tastes! Trinkets and dress, horses and dice, and plenty of ladies to look and die. Such princely spirit too! — bounding all return for loyal sacrifice to the honour you vouchsafed in accepting it!"

Uttering this embittered irony, which nevertheless seemed rather to please than to offend her guest, she kept moving about the room, and (whether from some drawer in the furniture, or from her own person, Losely's careless eye did not observe) she suddenly drew forth a miniature, and, placing it before him, exclaimed — "Ah, but you are altered from those days — see what you then were!"

Losely's gaze, thus abruptly invited, fixed itself on the effigies of a youth eminently handsome, and of that kind of beauty which, without being effeminate, approaches to the fineness and brilliancy of the female countenance — a beauty which renders its possessor inconveniently conspicuous, and too often, by winning that ready admiration which it costs no effort to obtain, withdraws the desire of applause from successes to be achieved by labour, and hardens egotism by the excuses it lends to self-esteem. It is true that this handsome face had not the elevation bestowed by thought-

ful expression; but thoughtful expression is not the attribute a painter seeks to give to the abstract comeliness of early youth — and it is seldom to be acquired without that constitutional wear and tear which is injurious to mere physical beauty. And over the whole countenance was diffused a sunny light, the freshness of thoughtless health, of luxuriant vigour, so that even that arrogant vanity which an acute observer might have detected as the prevailing mental characteristic, seemed but a glad exultation in the gifts of benignant nature. Not there the look which, in the matured man gazing on the bright ghost of his former self, might have daunted the timid and warned the wise. “And I was like this. True! I remember well when it was taken, and no one called it flattering,” said Mr. Losely with pathetic self-condolence. “But I can’t be very much changed,” he added with a half laugh. “At my age one may have a manlier look, yet” —

“Yet still be handsome, Jasper,” said Mrs. Crane. “You are so. But look at me — what am I?”

“Oh, a very fine woman, my dear Crane — always were. But you neglect yourself; you should not do that; keep it up to the last. Well, but to return to the child. You have disposed of her without my consent, without letting me know.”

“Letting you know! How many years is it since you even gave me your address? Never fear, she is in good hands.”

"Whose? At all events I must see her."

"See her! What for?"

"What for! Hang it, it is natural that, now I am in England, I should at least wish to know what she is like. And I think it very strange that you should send her away, and then make all these difficulties. What's your object? I don't understand it."

"My object? What could be my object but to serve you. At your request I took, fed, reared a child, whom you could not expect me to love, at my own cost. Did I ever ask you for a shilling? Did I ever suffer you to give me one? Never! At last, hearing no more *from* you, and what little I heard *of* you making me think that, if anything happened to me (and I was very ill at the time), you could only find her a burthen — at last, I say, the old man came to me — you had given him my address — and he offered to take her, and I consented. She is with him."

"The old man! She is with him! And where is he?"

"I don't know."

"Humph; how does he live? Can he have got any money?"

"I don't know."

"Did any old friends take him up?"

"Would he go to old friends?"

Mr. Losely tossed off two fresh glasses of brandy,

one after the other, and, rising, walked to and fro the room, his hands buried in his pockets, and in no comfortable vein of reflection. At length he paused and said, "Well, upon the whole, I don't see what I could do with the girl just at present, though, of course, I ought to know where she is, and with whom. Tell me, Mrs. Crane, what is she like — pretty or plain?"

"I suppose the chit would be called pretty — by some persons at least."

"*Very* pretty? handsome?" asked Losely abruptly.

"Handsome or not, what does it signify? what good comes of beauty? You had beauty enough; what have you done with it?"

At that question Losely drew himself up with a sudden loftiness of look and gesture, which, though prompted but by offended vanity, improved the expression of the countenance, and restored to it much of its earlier character. Mrs. Crane gazed on him, startled into admiration, and it was in an altered voice, half reproachful, half bitter, that she continued —

"And now that you are satisfied about her, have you no questions to ask about me — what I do — how I live?"

"My dear Mrs. Crane, I know that you are comfortably off, and were never of a mercenary temper. I trust you are happy, and so forth — I wish I were; things don't prosper with me. If you could conveniently lend me a five-pound note —"

"You would borrow of me, Jasper? Ah! you come to me in your troubles. You shall have the money — five pounds — ten pounds — what you please, but you will call again for it? — you need me now — you will not utterly desert me now?"

"Best of creatures! — never!" He seized her hand and kissed it. She withdrew it quickly from his clasp, and, glancing over him from head to foot, said, "But are you really in want? — you are well dressed, Jasper; that you always were."

"Not always; three days ago very much the reverse; but I have had a trifling aid, and —"

"Aid in England? from whom? where? Not from him whom, you say, you had the courage to seek?"

"From whom else? Have I no claim? A miserable alms flung to me. Curse him! I tell you that man's look and language so galled me — so galled," echoed Losely, shifting his hold from the top of his switch to the centre, and bringing the murderous weight of the lead down on the palm of his other hand, "that if his eye had quitted mine for a moment, I think I must have brained him, and been —"

"Hanged!" said Mrs. Crane.

"Of course, hanged," returned Losely, resuming the reckless voice and manner in which there was that peculiar levity which comes from hardness of heart, as from the steel's hardness comes the blade's play. "But if a man did not sometimes forget consequences, there

would be an end of the gallows. I am glad that his eye never left mine." And the leaden head of the switch fell with a dull dumb sound on the floor.

Mrs. Crane made no immediate rejoinder, but fixed on her lawless visitor a gaze in which there was no womanly fear (though Losely's aspect and gesture might have sent a thrill through the nerves of many a hardy man), but which was not without womanly compassion, her countenance gradually softening more and more, as if under the influence of recollections mournful but not hostile. At length she said in a low voice, "Poor Jasper! Is all the vain ambition that made you so false shrunk into a ferocity that finds you so powerless? Would your existence, after all, have been harder, poorer, meaner if your faith had been kept to me!"

Evidently disliking that turn in the conversation, but checking a reply which might have been rude had no visions of five pounds — ten pounds — loomed in the distance, Mr. Losely said, "Pshaw! Bella, Pshaw! I was a fool, I dare say, and a sad dog — a very sad dog; but I had always the greatest regard for you, and always shall! Hillo, what's that? A knock at the door! Oh, by-the-by, a queer-looking man, in a white hat, called at the same time I did, to see you on private business — gave way to me — said he should come again; may I ask who he is?"

"I cannot guess; no one ever calls here on business except the tax-gatherer."

The old woman-servant now entered. "A gentleman, ma'am — says his name is Rugge."

"Rugge — Rugge — let me think."

"I am here, Mrs. Crane," said the manager, striding in. "You don't perhaps call me to mind by name; but — oho — not gone, sir! Do I intrude prematurely?"

"No, I have done; good-day, my dear Mrs. Crane."

"Stay, Jasper. I remember you now, Mr. Rugge; take a chair."

She whispered a few words into Losely's ear, then turned to the manager, and said aloud: "I saw you at Mr. Waife's lodging, at the time he had that bad accident."

"And I had the honour to accompany you home, ma'am, and — but shall I speak out before this gentleman?"

"Certainly; you see he is listening to you with attention. This gentleman and I have no secrets from each other. What has become of that person? This gentleman wishes to know."

LOSELY. — "Yes, sir, I wish to know — particularly."

RUGGE. — "So do I; that is partly what I came about. You are aware, I think, ma'am, that I engaged him and Juliet Araminta — that is, Sophy."

LOSELY. — “Sophy — engaged them, sir — how?”

RUGGE. — “Theatrical line, sir — Rugge’s Exhibition; he was a great actor once, that fellow Waife.”

LOSELY. — “Oh, actor! — well, sir, go on.”

RUGGE (who in the course of his address turns from the lady to the gentleman, from the gentleman to the lady, with appropriate gesture and appealing look). — “But he became a wreck, a block of a man; lost an eye and his voice too. However, to serve him, I took his grandchild and him too. He left me — shamefully, and ran off with his grandchild, sir. Now, ma’am, to be plain with you, that little girl I looked upon as my property — a very valuable property. She is worth a great deal to me, and I have been done out of her. If you can help me to get her back, articed and engaged say for three years, I am willing and happy, ma’am, to pay something handsome — uncommon handsome.”

MRS. CRANE (loftily). — “Speak to that gentleman — *he* may treat with you.”

LOSELY. — “What do you call uncommon handsome, Mr. — Mr. Tugge?”

RUGGE. — “Rugge! Sir; we shan’t disagree, I hope, provided you have the power to get Waife to bind the girl to me.”

LOSELY. — “I may have the power to transfer the young lady to your care; young lady is a more respectful phrase than girl, and possibly to dispense with Mr.

Waife's consent to such arrangement. But excuse me if I say that I must know a little more of yourself, before I could promise to exert such a power on your behalf."

RUGGE. — "Sir, I shall be proud to improve our acquaintance. As to Waife, the old vagabond, he has injured and affronted me, sir. I don't bear malice, but I have a spirit — Britons have a spirit, sir. And you will remember, ma'am, that when I accompanied you home, I observed that Mr. Waife was a mysterious man, and had apparently known better days, and that when a man is mysterious, and falls into the sere and yellow leaf, ma'am, without that which should accompany old age, sir, one has a right to suspect that some time or other he has done something or other, ma'am, makes him fear lest the very stones prate of his whereabouts, sir. And you did not deny, ma'am, that the mystery was suspicious, but you said, with uncommon good sense, that it was nothing to me what Mr. Waife had once been, so long as he was of use to me at that particular season. Since then, sir, he has ceased to be of use — ceased, too, in the unhandsomest manner. And if you would, ma'am, from a sense of justice, just unravel the mystery, put me in possession of the secret, it might make that base man of use to me again — give me a handle over him, sir, so that I might awe him into restoring my property, as, morally speaking, Juliet Araminta most undoubtedly is. That's why I call —

leaving my company, to which I am a father, orphans for the present. But I have missed that little girl — that young lady, sir. I called her a phenomenon, ma'am — missed her much — it is natural, sir; I appeal to you. No man can be done out of a valuable property and not feel it, if he has a heart in his bosom. And if I had her back safe, I should indulge ambition. I have always had ambition. The theatre at York, sir — that is my ambition; I had it from a child, sir; dreamed of it three times, ma'am. If I had back my property in that phenomenon, I would go at the thing, slap bang, take the York, and bring out the phenomenon, with *a claw!*”

LOSELY (musingly). — “You say the young lady is a phenomenon, and for this phenomenon you are willing to pay something handsome — a vague expression. Put it into £. s. d.”

RUGGE. — “Sir, if she can be bound to me legally for three years, I would give £. 100. I did offer to Waife £. 50 — to you, sir, £. 100.”

Losely's eyes flashed and his hands opened restlessly. “But, confound it, where is she? have you no clue?”

RUGGE. — “No, but we can easily find one; it was not worth my while to hunt them up, before I was quite sure that, if I regained my property in that phenomenon, the law would protect it.”

MRS. CRANE (moving to the door). — “Well, Jasper Losely, you will sell the young lady, I doubt not; and when you have sold her, let me know.” She came back and whispered, “You will not perhaps now want money from me, but I shall see you again; for, if you would find the child, you will need my aid.”

“Certainly, my dear friend, I will call again; honour bright.”

Mrs. Crane here bowed to the gentlemen, and swept out of the room.

Thus left alone, Losely and Rugge looked at each other with a shy and yet cunning gaze — Rugge’s hands in his trousers pockets, his head thrown back — Losely’s hands involuntarily expanded, his head bewitchingly bent forward, and a little on one side.

“Sir,” said Rugge at length, “what do you say to a chop and a pint of wine? Perhaps we could talk more at our ease elsewhere. I am only in town for a day — left my company thirty miles off — orphans, as I said before.”

“Mr. Rugge,” said Losely, “I have no desire to stay in London, or indeed in England; and the sooner we can settle this matter the better. Grant that we find the young lady, you provide for her board and lodging — teach her your honourable profession — behave, of course, kindly to her” —

“Like a father.”

"And give to me the sum of £.100?"

"That is, if you can legally make her over to me. But, sir, may I inquire by what authority you would act in this matter?"

"On that head it will be easy to satisfy you; meanwhile I accept your proposal of an early dinner. Let us adjourn — is it to your house?"

"I have no exact private house in London; but I know a public one — commodious."

"Be it so. After you, sir."

As they descended the stairs, the old woman-servant stood at the street door. Rugge went out first — the woman detained Losely.

"Do you find her altered?"

"Whom? Mrs. Crane? — why, years will tell. But you seem to have known me — I don't remember you."

"Not Bridgett Greggs?"

"Is it possible? I left you a middle-aged, rosy-faced woman. True, I recognise you now. There's a crown for you. I wish I had more to spare!"

Bridgett pushed back the silver.

"No — I dare not! Take money from you, Jasper Losely! Mistress would not forgive me!"

Losely, not unreluctantly, restored the crown to his pocket; and, with a snort, rather than sigh, of relief,

stepped into open daylight. As he crossed the street to join Rugge, who was waiting for him on the shady side, he mechanically turned to look back at the house, and, at the open window of an upper story, he beheld again those shining eyes which had glared down on him from the stairs. He tried to smile, and waved his hand feebly. The eyes seemed to return the smile; and as he walked down the street, arm-in-arm with the ruffian manager, slowly recovering his springy step, and in the gloss of the new garments that set forth his still symmetrical proportions, the eyes followed him watchfully — steadfastly — till his form had vanished, and the dull street was once more a solitude.

Then Arabella Crane turned from the window. Putting her hand to her heart, "How it beats," she muttered; "if in love or in hate, in scorn or in pity, beats once more with a human emotion. He will come again — whether for money or for woman's wit, what care I — he will come. — I will hold, I will cling to him, no more to part — for better for worse, as it should have been once at the altar. And the child?" — she paused; was it in compunction? "The child!" she continued fiercely, and as if lashing herself into rage, "The child of that treacherous, hateful mother — yes! I will help him to sell her back as a stage-show — help him in all that does not lift her to a state from which she may look down with disdain on me. Revenge on her, on that cruel house — revenge is sweet. Oh!

that it were revenge alone that bids me cling to him who deserves revenge the most." She closed her burning eyes, and sate down droopingly, rocking herself to and fro like one in pain.

CHAPTER XVII.

In life it is difficult to say who do you the most mischief, enemies with the worst intentions, or friends with the best.

The conference between Mr. Rugge and Mr. Losely terminated in an appointment to meet, the next day, at the village in which this story opened. Meanwhile Mr. Rugge would return to his "orphans," and arrange performances in which, for some days, they might dispense with a Father's part. Losely, on his side, undertook to devote the intervening hours to consultation with a solicitor, to whom Mr. Rugge recommended him, as to the prompt obtaining of legal powers to enforce the authority he asserted himself to possess. He would also persuade Mrs. Crane to accompany him to the village, and aid in the requisite investigations — entertaining a tacit but instinctive belief in the superiority of her acuteness. "Set a female to catch a female," quoth Mr. Rugge.

On the day and in the place thus fixed, the three hunters opened their chase. They threw off at the cobbler's stall. They soon caught the same scent which had been followed by the lawyer's clerk. They arrived

at Mrs. Saunders' — there the two men would have been at fault like their predecessor. But the female was more astute. To drop the metaphor, Mrs. Saunders could not stand the sharp cross-examination of one of her own sex. "That woman deceives us," said Mrs. Crane, on leaving the house. "They have not gone to London. What could they do there? Any man with a few stage juggling tricks can get on in country villages, but would be lost in cities. Perhaps, as it seems he has got a dog — we have found out that from Mrs. Saunders — he will make use of it for an itinerant puppet-show."

"Punch!" said Mr. Rugge — "not a doubt of it."

"In that case," observed Mrs. Crane, "they are probably not far off. Let us print handbills, offering a reward for their clue, and luring the old man himself by an assurance that the inquiry is made in order that he may learn of something to his advantage."

In the course of the evening the handbills were printed. The next day they were posted up on the walls, not only of that village, but on those of the small towns and hamlets for some miles round. The handbills ran invitingly thus: "If William Waife, who left — on the 20th ult., will apply at the Red Lion Inn at —, for X. X., he will learn of something greatly to his advantage. A reward of £. 5 will be given to any one who will furnish information where the said William Waife, and the little girl who accompanies him, may

be found. The said William Waife is about sixty years of age, of middle stature, strongly built, has lost one eye, and is lame of one leg. The little girl, called Sophy, is twelve years old, but looks younger; has blue eyes and light brown hair. They had with them a white French poodle dog. This bill is printed by the friends of the missing party." The next day passed — no information; but on the day following, a young gentleman of good mien, dressed in black, rode into the town, stopped at the Red Lion Inn, and asked to see X. X. The two men were out on their researches — Mrs. Crane staid at home to answer inquiries.

The gentleman was requested to dismount, and walk in. Mrs. Crane received him in the inn parlour, which swarmed with flies. She stood in the centre — vigilant, grim spider of the place.

"I ca-ca-call," said the gentleman, stammering fearfully, "in con-consequence of a b-b-bill — I ch-chanced to see in my ri-ri-ri-ride yesterday — on a wa-wa-wall: — You — you, I — sup-sup —"

"Am X. X.," put in Mrs. Crane, growing impatient, "one of the friends of Mr. Waife, by whom the hand-bill has been circulated; it will indeed be a great relief to us to know where they are — the little girl more especially."

Mrs. Crane was respectably dressed — in silk, iron-grey; she had crisped her flakey tresses into stiff hard

ringlets, that fell like long screws from under a black velvet band. Mrs. Crane never wore a cap — nor could you fancy her in a cap; but the velvet band looked as rigid as if gummed to a hoop of steel. Her manner and tone of voice were those of an educated person, not unused to some society above the vulgar; and yet the visitor, in whom the reader recognises the piscatorial Oxonian, with whom Waife had interchanged philosophy on the marge of the running brooklet, drew back as he advanced and spoke; and, bent on an errand of kindness, he was seized with a vague misgiving.

Mrs. CRANE (blandly). — “I fear they must be badly off. I hope they are not wanting the necessaries of life. But pray be seated, sir.” She looked at him again, and with more respect in her address than she had before thrown into it, added, with a half curtsy, as she seated herself by his side, “A clergyman of the Established Church, I presume, sir?”

OXONIAN (stammer, as on a former occasion, respectfully omitted). — “With this defect, ma’am! — But to the point. Some days ago I happened to fall in with an elderly person, such as is described, with a very pretty female child, and a French dog. The man — gentleman, perhaps, I may call him, judging from his conversation — interested me much; so did the little girl. And if I could be the means of directing real friends anxious to serve them —”

MRS. CRANE. — "You would indeed be a benefactor. And where are they now, sir?"

OXONIAN. — "That I cannot positively tell you. But before I say more, will you kindly satisfy my curiosity? He is perhaps an eccentric person — this Mr. Waife? — a little —" The Oxonian stopped, and touched his forehead. Mrs. Crane made no prompt reply — she was musing. Unwarily the scholar continued: "Because, in that case, I should not like to interfere. So many persons are shut up, where there is no insanity; but where there is property —"

MRS. CRANE. — "Quite right, sir. His friends would not interfere with his roving ways, his little whims, on any account. Poor man, why should they? No property at all for them to covet, I assure you. But it is a long story. I had the care of that dear little girl from her infancy; sweet child!"

OXONIAN. — "So she seems."

MRS. CRANE. — "And now she has a most comfortable home provided for her; and a young girl, with good friends, ought not to be tramping about the country, whatever an old man may do. You must allow that, sir?"

OXONIAN. — "Well — yes, I allow that; it occurred to me. But what is the man? — the gentleman?"

MRS. CRANE. — "Very 'eccentric,' as you say, and inconsiderate, perhaps, as to the little girl. We will

not call it insane, sir; we can't bear to look at it in that light. But — are you married?"

OXONIAN (blushing). — "No, ma'am."

MRS. CRANE. — "But you have a sister, perhaps?"

OXONIAN. — "Yes; I have one sister."

MRS. CRANE. — "Would you like your sister to be running about the country in that way — carried off from her home, kindred, and friends?"

OXONIAN. — "Ah! I understand. The poor little girl is fond of the old man — a relation, grandfather perhaps? and he has taken her from her home; and though not actually insane, he is still —"

MRS. CRANE. — "An unsafe guide for a female child, delicately reared. *I* reared her; of good prospects too. O sir, let us save the child! Look —" She drew from a side-pocket in her stiff iron-grey apron a folded paper; she placed it in the Oxonian's hand; he glanced over and returned it.

"I see, ma'am. I cannot hesitate after this. It is a good many miles off where I met the persons whom I have no doubt that you seek; and two or three days ago my father received a letter from a very worthy, excellent man, with whom he is often brought into communication upon benevolent objects — a Mr. Har-topp, the Mayor of Gatesboro', in which, among other matters, the mayor mentioned briefly that the Literary

Institute of that town had been much delighted by the performance of a very remarkable man with one eye, about whom there seemed some mystery, with a little girl and a learned dog; and I can't help thinking that the man, the girl, and the dog, must be those whom I saw, and you seek."

MRS. CRANE. — "At Gatesboro'? — is that far?"

"Some way; but you can get a cross train from this village. I hope that the old man will not be separated from the little girl; they seemed very fond of each other."

"No doubt of it; very fond; it would be cruel to separate them. A comfortable home for both. I don't know, sir, if I dare offer to a gentleman of your evident rank the reward, — but for the poor of your parish."

"Oh, ma'am, our poor want for nothing; my father is rich. But if you would oblige me by a line after you have found these interesting persons — I am going to a distant part of the country to-morrow — to Montfort Court, in — shire."

MRS. CRANE. — "'To Lord Montfort — the head of the noble family of Vipont?"

OXONIAN. — "Yes; you know any of the family, ma'am? If you could refer me to one of them, I should feel more satisfied as to —"

MRS. CRANE (hastily). — "Indeed, sir, every one must know that great family by name and repute. I know no more. So you are going to Lord Montfort's! The Marchioness, they say, is very beautiful?"

OXONIAN. — "And good as beautiful. I have the honour to be connected both with her and Lord Montfort; they are cousins, and my grandfather was a Vipont. I should have told you my name — Morley; George Vipont Morley."

Mrs. Crane made a profound curtsy, and, with an unmistakable smile of satisfaction, said, as if half in soliloquy — "So it is to one of that noble family — to a Vipont — that the dear child will owe her restoration to my embrace! Bless you, sir!"

"I hope I have done right," said George Vipont Morley, as he mounted his horse. "I must have done right, surely!" he said again, when he was on the high-road. "I fear I have not done right," he said a third time, as the face of Mrs. Crane began to haunt him; and when at sunset he reached his home, tired out, horse and man, with an unusually long ride, and the green water-bank on which he had overheard poor Waife's simple grace and joyous babble came in sight — "After all," he said, dolefully, "it was no business of mine. I meant well; but —." His little sister ran to the gate to greet him — "Yes! I did quite right.

How should I like my sister to be roving the country,
and acting at Literary Institutes with a poodle dog.
Quite right; kiss me, Jane!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

Let a king and a beggar converse freely together, and it is the beggar's fault if he does not say something which makes the king lift his hat to him.

The scene shifts back to Gatesboro', the forenoon of the day succeeding the memorable Exhibition at the Institute of that learned town. Mr. Hartopp was in the little parlour behind his country-house, his hours of business much broken into by those intruders who deem no time unseasonable for the indulgence of curiosity, the interchange of thought, or the interest of general humanity and of national enlightenment. The excitement produced on the previous evening by Mr. Chapman, Sophy, and Sir Isaac, was greatly on the increase. Persons who had seen them naturally called on the Mayor to talk over the Exhibition. Persons who had not seen them, still more naturally dropped in just to learn what was really Mr. Mayor's private opinion. The little parlour was thronged by a regular levee. There was the proprietor of a dismal building, still called "The Theatre," which was seldom let except at election-time, when it was hired by the popular

candidate for the delivery of those harangues upon liberty and conscience, tyranny and oppression, which furnish the staple of declamation equally to the dramatist and the orator. There was also the landlord of the Royal Hotel, who had lately built to his house "The City Concert-room" — a superb apartment, but a losing speculation. There, too, were three highly respectable persons, of a serious turn of mind, who came to suggest doubts whether an entertainment of so frivolous a nature was not injurious to the morality of Gatesboro'. Besides these notables, there were loungers and gossips, with no particular object except that of ascertaining who Mr Chapman was by birth and parentage, and suggesting the expediency of a deputation ostensibly for the purpose of asking him to repeat his performance, but charged with private instructions to cross-examine him as to his pedigree. The gentle Mayor kept his eyes fixed on a mighty ledger-book, pen in hand. The attitude was a rebuke on intruders, and in ordinary times would have been so considered. But mildness, however majestic, is not always effective in periods of civic commotion. The room was animated by hubbub. You caught broken sentences here and there crossing each other, like the sounds that had been frozen in the air, and set free by a thaw, according to the veracious narrative of Baron Munchausen.

PLAYHOUSE PROPRIETOR. — "The theatre is the —"

SERIOUS GENTLEMAN. — “Plausible snare by which a population at present grave and well-disposed, is decoyed into becoming —”

EXCITED ADMIRER — “A French poodle, sir, that plays at dominoes like a —”

CREDULOUS CONJECTURER. — “Benevolent philanthropist, condescending to act for the benefit of some distressed brother who is —”

PROPRIETOR OF CITY CONCERT-ROOM. — “One hundred and twenty feet long by forty, Mr. Mayor! Talk of that damp theatre, sir, you might as well talk of the —”

Suddenly the door flew open, and pushing aside a clerk who designed to announce him, in burst Mr. Chapman himself.

He had evidently expected to find the Mayor alone. For at the sight of that throng he checked himself, and stood mute at the threshold. The levee for a moment was no less surprised, and no less mute. But the good folks soon recovered themselves. To many it was a pleasure to accost and congratulate the man who the night before had occasioned to them emotions so agreeable. Cordial smiles broke out — friendly hands were thrust forth. Brief but hearty compliments, mingled with entreaties to renew the performance to a larger audience, were showered round. The Comedian stood hat in hand, mechanically passing

his sleeve over its nap, muttering half inaudibly, "You see before you a man" — and turning his single eye from one face to the other, as if struggling to guess what was meant, or where he was. The Mayor rose and came forward — "My dear friends," said he, mildly, "Mr. Chapman calls by appointment. Perhaps he may have something to say to me confidentially."

The three serious gentlemen, who had hitherto remained aloof, eyeing Mr. Chapman, much as three inquisitors might have eyed a Jew, shook three solemn heads, and set the example of retreat. The last to linger were the rival proprietors of the theatre and the city concert-room. Each whispered the stranger — one the left ear, one the right. Each thrust into his hand a printed paper. As the door closed on them the Comedian let fall the papers; his arm drooped to his side; his whole frame seemed to collapse. Hartopp took him by the hand, and led him gently to his own arm-chair beside the table. The Comedian dropped on the chair, still without speaking.

MR. HARTOPP. — "What is the matter? What has happened?"

WAIFF. — "She is very ill; — in a bad way; the doctor says so — Dr. Gill."

MR. HARTOPP (feelingly). — "Your little girl in a bad way! Oh, no; doctors always exaggerate in order

to get more credit for the cure. Not that I would disparage Dr. Gill — fellow-townsmen — first-rate man. Still 'tis the way with doctors to talk cheerfully, if one is in danger, and to look solemn if there is nothing to fear."

WIFE. — "Do you think so — you have children of your own, sir? — of her age, too? — Eh! eh!"

MR. HARTOPP. — "Yes; I know all about children — better, I think, than Mrs. H. does. What is the complaint?"

WIFE. — "The doctor says it is low fever."

MR. HARTOPP. — "Caused by nervous excitement, perhaps."

WIFE (looking up). — "Yes — that's what he says — nervous excitement."

MR. HARTOPP. — "Clever sensitive children, subjected precociously to emulation and emotion, are always liable to such maladies. My third girl, Anna Maria, fell into a low fever, caused by nervous excitement in trying for school prizes."

WIFE. — "Did she die of it, sir?"

MR. HARTOPP (shuddering). — "Die — No! I removed her from school — set her to take care of the poultry — forbade all French exercises, made her take English exercise instead — and ride on a donkey. She's quite another thing now — cheeks as red as an apple, and as firm as a cricket-ball."

WAIFE. — “I will keep poultry; I will buy a donkey. Oh, sir! you don’t think she will go to heaven yet, and leave me here?”

MR. HARTOPP. — “Not if you give her rest and quiet. But no excitement — no exhibitions.”

WAIFE (emptying his pockets on the table). — “Will you kindly count that money, sir? Don’t you think that would be enough to find her some pretty lodging hereabouts till she gets quite strong again? With green fields — she’s fond of green fields, and a farmyard with poultry — though we were lodging a few days ago with a good woman who kept hens, and Sophy did not seem to take to them much. A canary bird is more of a companion, and —”

HARTOPP (interrupting). — “Ay — ay — and you! what would you do?”

WAIFE. — “Why, I and the dog would go away for a little while about the country.”

HARTOPP. — “Exhibiting?”

WAIFE. — “That money will not last for ever, and what can we do — I and the dog — in order to get more for her?”

HARTOPP (pressing his hand warmly). — “You are a good man, sir. I am sure of it; you cannot have done things which you should be afraid to tell me. Make me your confidant, and I may then find some

employment fit for you, and you need not separate yourself from your little girl."

WAIFE. — "Separate from her! I should only leave her for a few days at a time till she gets well. This money would keep her — how long? Two months — three? how long? — the doctor would not charge much."

HARTOPP. — "You will not confide in me, then? At your age — have you no friends — no one to speak a good word for you?"

WAIFE (jerking up his head with a haughty air). — "So — so! Who talks to you about me, sir? I am speaking of my innocent child. Does she want a good word spoken for her? Heaven has written it in her face."

Hartopp persisted no more, the excellent man was sincerely grieved at his visitor's obstinate avoidance of the true question at issue; for the Mayor could have found employment for a man of Waife's evident education and talent. But such employment would entail responsibilities and trust. How recommend to it a man of whose life and circumstances nothing could be known — a man without a character? — And Waife interested him deeply. We have all felt that there are some persons towards whom we are attracted by a peculiar sympathy not to be explained — a something in the manner, the cut of the face, the tone of the voice. If there are fifty

applicants for a benefit in our gift, one of the fifty wins his way to our preference at first sight, though with no better right to it than his fellows. We can no more say why we like the man than we can say why we fall in love with a woman in whom no one else would discover a charm. "There is," says a Latin love-poet, "no why or wherefore in liking." Hartopp, therefore, had taken, from the first moment, to Waife — the staid, respectable, thriving man, all muffled up from head to foot in the whitest lawn of reputation — to the wandering, shifty, tricksome scatterling, who had not seemingly secured, through the course of a life bordering upon age, a single certificate for good conduct. On his hearthstone, beside his leger-book, stood the Mayor, looking with a respectful admiration that puzzled himself upon the forlorn creature, who could give no reason why he should not be rather in the Gatesboro' Parish Stocks than in its chief magistrate's easy-chair. Yet were the Mayor's sympathetic liking and respectful admiration wholly unaccountable? Runs there not between one warm human heart and another the electric chain of a secret understanding? In that maimed outcast, so stubbornly hard to himself — so tremulously sensitive for his sick child — was there not the majesty to which they who have learned that Nature has her nobles, reverently bow the head! A man, true to man's grave religion, can no more despise

a life wrecked in all else, while a hallowing affection stands out sublime through the rents and chinks of fortune, than he can profane with rude mockery a temple in ruins — if still left there the altar.

CHAPTER XIX.

Very well so far as it goes.

MR. HARTOPP. — "I cannot presume to question you further, Mr. Chapman. But to one of your knowledge of the world, I need not say that your silence deprives me of the power to assist yourself. We'll talk no more of that."

WAIFE. — "Thank you gratefully, Mr. Mayor."

MR. HARTOPP. — "But for the little girl, make your mind easy — at least for the present. I will place her at my farm cottage. My bailiff's wife, a kind woman, will take care of her, while you pursue your calling elsewhere. As for this money, you will want it yourself; your poor little child shall cost you nothing. So that's settled. Let me come up and see her. I am a bit of a doctor myself. Every man blest with a large family, in whose house there is always some interesting case of small-pox, measles, whooping-cough, scarlatina, &c., has a good private practice of his own. I'm not brilliant in book learning, Mr. Chapman. But as to children's complaints in a practical way," added Hartopp, with a glow of pride, "Mrs H.

says she'd rather trust the little ones to me than Dr. Gill. I'll see your child, and set her up, I'll be bound. But now I think of it," continued Hartopp, softening more and more, "if exhibit you must, why not stay at Gatesboro' for a time? More may be made in this town than elsewhere."

"No, no; I could not have the heart to act here again without her. I feel at present as if I can never again act at all! Something else will turn up. Providence is so kind to me, Mr. Mayor."

Waife turned to the door — "You will come soon?" he said anxiously.

The Mayor, who had been locking up his ledgers and papers, replied, "I will but stay to give some orders; in a quarter of an hour I shall be at your hotel."

CHAPTER XX.

Sophy hides heart and shows temper.

The child was lying on a sofa drawn near the window in her own room, and on her lap was the doll Lionel had given to her. Carried with her in her wanderings, she had never played with it; never altered a ribbon in its yellow tresses; but at least once a-day she had taken it forth and looked at it in secret. And all that morning, left much to herself, it had been her companion. She was smoothing down its frock, which she fancied had got ruffled — smoothing it down with a sort of fearful tenderness, the doll all the while staring her full in the face with its blue bead eyes. Waife, seated near her, was trying to talk gaily; to invent fairy tales blithe with sport and fancy; but his invention flagged, and the fairies prosed awfully. He had placed the dominoes before Sir Isaac, but Sophy had scarcely looked at them, from the languid heavy eyes on which the doll so stupidly fixed its own. Sir Isaac himself seemed spiritless; he was aware that something was wrong. Now and then he got up restlessly, sniffed the dominoes, and placed a paw gently,

very gently, on Sophy's knee. Not being encouraged, he lay down again uneasily, often shifting his position as if the floor was grown too hard for him. Thus the Mayor found the three. He approached Sophy with the step of a man accustomed to sickrooms and ailing children — step light as if shod with felt — put his hand on her shoulder, kissed her forehead, and then took the doll. Sophy started, and took it back from him quickly, but without a word; then she hid it behind her pillow. The Mayor smiled — “My dear child, do you think I should hurt your doll?”

Sophy coloured, and said murmuringly, “No, sir, not hurt it, but —” she stopped short.

“I have been talking to your grandpapa about you, my dear, and we both wish to give you a little holiday. Dolls are well enough for the winter, but green fields and daisy-chains for the summer.”

Sophy glanced from the Mayor to her grandfather, and back again to the Mayor, shook her curls from her eyes, and looked seriously inquisitive.

The Mayor, observing her quietly, stole her hand into his own, feeling the pulse as if merely caressing the slender wrist. Then he began to describe his bailiff's cottage, with woodbine round the porch, the farm-yard, the beehives, the pretty duck-pond with an osier island, and the great China gander who had a pompous strut, which made him the drollest creature possible. And Sophy should go there in a day or

two, and be as happy as one of the bees, but not so busy.

Sophy listened very earnestly, very gravely, and then sliding her hand from the Mayor, caught hold of her grandfather's arm firmly, and said, "And you, Grandy — will you like it? — won't it be dull for you, Grandy, dear?"

"Why, my darling," said Waife, "I and Sir Isaac will go and take a stroll about the country for a few weeks, and —"

SOPHY (passionately). — "I thought so; I thought he meant that. I tried not to believe it; go away — you? and who's to take care of you? who'll understand you? I want care! I — I! No, no, it is you — you who want care. I shall be well to-morrow — quite well, don't fear. He shall not be sent away from me; he shall not, sir. Oh, grandfather, grandfather, how could you?" She flung herself on his breast, clinging there, clinging as if infancy and age were but parts of the same whole.

"But," said the Mayor, "it is not as if you were going to school, my dear; you are going for a holiday. And your grandfather must leave you — must travel about — 'tis his calling. If you fell ill and were with him, think how much you would be in his way. Do you know," he added smiling, "I shall begin to fear that you are selfish."

"Selfish!" exclaimed Waife angrily.

"Selfish!" echoed Sophy with a melancholy scorn that came from a sentiment so deep that mortal eye could scarce fathom it. "Oh, no, sir! can you say it is for *his* good, not for, what he supposes, mine, that you want us to part? The pretty cottage — and all for me — and what for him? — tramp, tramp along the hot dusty roads. Do you see that he is lame? Oh, sir, I know him — you don't. Selfish! he would have no merry ways that make you laugh without me; would you, Grandy, dear? Go away, you are a naughty man — go, or I shall hate you as much as that dreadful Mr. Rugge."

"Rugge — who is he?" said the Mayor curiously, catching at any clue.

"Hush, my darling! — hush!" said Waife, fondling her on his breast. "Hush! What is to be done, sir?"

Hartopp made a sly sign to him, to say no more before Sophy, and then replied, addressing himself to her —

"What is to be done? Nothing shall be done, my dear child, that you dislike. I don't wish to part you two. Don't hate me — lie down again — that's a dear. There, I have smoothed your pillow for you; oh, here's your pretty doll again."

Sophy snatched at the doll petulantly, and made what the French call a *moue* at the good man, as she suffered her grandfather to replace her on the sofa.

"She has a strong temper of her own," muttered the Mayor; "so has Anna Maria a strong temper!"

Now, if I were anyway master of my own pen, and could write as I pleased, without being hurried along, helter-skelter, by the tyrannical exactions of that "young Rapid" in buskins and chiton, called "THE HISTORIC MUSE," I would break off this chapter, open my window, rest my eyes on the green lawn without, and indulge in a rhapsodical digression upon that beautifier of the moral life, which is called "Good Temper." Ha — the Historic Muse is dozing. By her leave! — Softly.

CHAPTER XXI.

Being an Essay on Temper in general, and a hazardous experiment on the reader's in particular.

There, the window is open! how instinctively the eye rests upon the green! how the calm colour lures and soothes it. But is there to the green only a single hue? See how infinite the variety of its tints! What sombre gravity in yon cedar, yon motionless pine-tree! What lively but unvarying laugh in yon glossy laurels! Do those tints charm us like the play in the young leaves of the lilac — lighter here, darker there, as the breeze (and so slight the breeze!) stirs them into checker — into ripple? Oh sweet green, to the world, what sweet temper is to man's life! Who would reduce into one dye all thy lovely varieties? who exclude the dark steadfast verdure that lives on through the winter day; or the mutinous caprice of the gentler, younger tint that came fresh through the tears of April, and will shadow with sportive tremor the blooms of luxuriant June?

Happy the man on whose marriage-hearth temper

smiles kind from the eyes of woman! "No deity present," saith the heathen proverb, "where absent — Prudence" — no joy long a guest where Peace is not a dweller. Peace, so like Faith, that they may be taken for each other, and poets have clad them with the same veil. But in childhood, in early youth, expect not the changeless green of the cedar. Wouldst thou distinguish fine temper from spiritless dulness, from cold simulation — ask less what the temper, than what the disposition.

Is the nature sweet and trustful, is it free from the morbid self-love which calls itself "sensitive feeling," and frets at imaginary offences; is the tendency to be grateful for kindness — yet take kindness meekly, and accept as a benefit what the vain call a due? From dispositions thus blessed, sweet temper will come forth to gladden thee, spontaneous and free. Quick with some, with some slow, word and look emerge out of the heart. Be thy first question, "Is the heart itself generous and tender?" If it be so, self-control comes with deepening affection. Call not that a good heart which, hastening to sting if a fibre be ruffled, cries, "I am no hypocrite." Accept that excuse, and revenge becomes virtue. But where the heart, if it give the offence, pines till it win back the pardon; if offended itself, bounds forth to forgive, ever longing to soothe, ever grieved if it wound; then be sure that its nobleness will need but few trials of pain in each outbreak,

to refine and chastise its expression. Fear not then; be but noble thyself, thou art safe!

Yet what in childhood is often called, rebukingly, "temper," is but the cordial and puissant vitality which contains all the elements that make temper the sweetest at last. Who amongst us, how wise soever, can construe a child's heart? who conjecture all the springs that secretly vibrate within, to a touch on the surface of feeling? Each child, but especially the girl-child, would task the whole lore of a sage, deep as Shakespeare, to distinguish those subtle emotions which we grown folks have outlived.

"She has a strong temper," said the Mayor, when Sophy snatched the doll from his hand a second time and pouted at him, spoiled child, looking so divinely cross, so petulantly pretty. And how on earth could the Mayor know what associations with that stupid doll made her think it profaned by the touch of a stranger? Was it to her eyes as to his — mere waxwork and frippery, or a symbol of holy remembrances, of gleams into a fairer world, of "devotion to something afar from the sphere of her sorrow?" Was not the evidence of "strong temper" the very sign of affectionate depth of heart? Poor little Sophy. Hide it again — safe out of sight — close, inscrutable, unguessed, as childhood's first treasures of sentiment ever are!

CHAPTER XXII.

The object of Civilisation being always to settle people one way or the other, the Mayor of Gatesboro' entertains a statesmanlike ambition to settle Gentleman Waife: no doubt a wise conception, and in accordance with the genius of the Nation. — Every Session of Parliament, England is employed in settling folks, whether at home or at the Antipodes, who ignorantly object to be settled in her way; in short, "I'll settle them," has become a vulgar idiom, tantamount to a threat of uttermost extermination or smash. — Therefore the Mayor of Gatesboro', harbouring that benignant idea with reference to "Gentleman Waife," all kindly readers will exclaim, "Dii, Meliora! What will he do with it?"

THE doll once more safe behind the pillow, Sophy's face gradually softened; she bent forward, touched the Mayor's hand timidly, and looked at him with pleading, penitent eyes, still wet with tears — eyes that said, though the lips were silent — "I'll not hate you. I was ungrateful and peevish; may I beg pardon?"

"I forgive you with all my heart," cried the Mayor, interpreting the look aright. "And now try and com-

pose yourself and sleep while I talk with your grand-papa below."

"I don't see how it is possible that I can leave her," said Waife, when the two men had adjourned to the sitting-room.

"I am sure," quoth the Mayor seriously, "that it is the best thing for her; her pulse has much nervous excitability; she wants a complete rest; she ought not to move about with you on any account. But come — though I must not know, it seems, who and what you are, Mr. Chapman — I don't think you will run off with my cows, and if you like to stay at the Bailiff's Cottage for a week or two with your grandchild, you shall be left in peace, and asked no questions. I will own to you a weakness of mine — I value myself on being seldom or never taken in. I don't think I could forgive the man who did take me in. But taken in I certainly shall be, if, despite all your mystery, you are not as honest a fellow as ever stood upon shoe-leather! So come to the cottage."

Waife was very much affected by this confiding kindness; but he shook his head despondently, and that same abject, almost cringing humility of mien and manner which had pained, at times, Lionel and Vance, crept over the whole man, so that he seemed to cower and shrink as a Pariah before a Brahmin. "No, sir: thank you most humbly. No, sir — that must not be.

I must work for my daily bread, if what a poor vagabond like me may do can be called work. I have made it a rule for years not to force myself to the hearth and home of any kind man, who, not knowing my past, has a right to suspect me. Where I lodge, I pay as a lodger; or whatever favour shown me spares my purse, I try to return in some useful, humble way. Why, sir, how could I make free and easy with another man's board and roof-tree for days or weeks together, when I would not even come to your hearthstone for a cup of tea?" The Mayor remembered, and was startled. Waife hurried on. "But for my poor child I have no such scruples — no shame, no false pride. I take what you offer her gratefully — gratefully. Ah, sir, she is not in her right place with me; but there's no use kicking against the pricks. Where was I? Oh! well, I tell you what we will do, sir. I will take her to the Cottage in a day or two — as she is well enough to go — and spend the day with her, and deceive her, sir! yes, deceive, cheat her, sir! I am a cheat — a player — and she'll think I'm going to stay with her; and at night, when she's asleep, I'll creep off, I and the other dog. But I'll leave a letter for her — it will soothe her, and she'll be patient and wait. I will come back again to see her in a week, and once every week till she's well again."

"And what will you do?"

"I don't know — but," said the actor, forcing a

laugh — "I'm not a man likely to starve. Oh, never fear, sir!"

So the Mayor went away, and strolled across the fields to his Bailiff's cottage, to prepare for the guest it would receive.

"It is all very well that the poor man should be away for some days," thought Mr. Hartopp. "Before he comes again, I shall have hit on some plan to serve him; and I can learn more about him from the child in his absence, and see what he is really fit for. There's a schoolmaster wanted in Morley's village. Old Morley wrote to me to recommend him one. Good salary — pretty house. But it would be wrong to set over young children — recommend to a respectable proprietor and his parson — a man whom I know nothing about. Impossible! that will not do. If there was any place of light service which did not require trust or responsibility — but there is no such place in Great Britain. Suppose I were to set him up in some easy way of business — a little shop, eh? I don't know. What would Williams say? If, indeed, I were taken in! — if the man I am thus credulously trusting turned out a rogue" — the Mayor paused and actually shivered at that thought — "why then, I should be fallen indeed. My wife would not let me have half-a-crown in my pockets; and I could not walk a hundred yards but Williams would be at my heels to protect me from being stolen by gypsies. Taken in by him! — No,

impossible! But if it turn out as I suspect — that contrary to vulgar prudence, I am divining a really great and good man in difficulties — Aha, what a triumph I shall then gain over them all. How Williams will revere me!" The good man laughed aloud at that thought, and walked on with a prouder step.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A pretty trifle in its way, no doubt, is the love between youth and youth — Gay varieties of the bauble spread the counter of the Great Toy-Shop — But thou, courteous Dame Nature, raise thine arm to yon shelf, somewhat out of everyday reach, and bring me down that obsolete, neglected, unconsidered thing, the Love between Age and Childhood.

The next day Sophy was better — the day after, improvement was more visible — and on the third day Waife paid his bill, and conducted her to the rural abode to which, credulous at last of his promises to share it with her for a time, he enticed her fated steps. It was little more than a mile beyond the suburbs of the town, and though the walk tired her, she concealed fatigue, and would not suffer him to carry her. The cottage now smiled out before them — thatched gable roof, with fancy barge-board — half Swiss, half what is called Elizabethan — all the fences and sheds round it, as only your rich traders, condescending to turn farmers, construct and maintain — sheds and fences, trim and neat, as if models in waxwork. The breezy

air came fresh from the new haystacks — from the woodbine round the porch — from the breath of the lazy kine, as they stood knee-deep in the pool, that, belted with weeds and broad-leaved water-lilies, lay calm and gleaming amidst level pastures.

Involuntarily they arrested their steps, to gaze on the cheerful landscape and inhale the balmy air. Meanwhile the Mayor came out from the cottage porch, his wife leaning on his arm, and two of his younger children bounding on before, with joyous faces, giving chase to a gaudy butterfly which they had started from the woodbine.

Mrs. Hartopp had conceived a lively curiosity to see and judge for herself of the objects of her liege lord's benevolent interest. She shared, of course, the anxiety which formed the standing excitement of all those who lived but for one godlike purpose — that of preserving Josiah Hartopp from being taken in. But whenever the Mayor specially wished to secure his wife's countenance to any pet project of his own, and convince her either that he was not taken in, or that to be discreetly taken in is in this world a very popular and sure mode of getting up, he never failed to attain his end. That man was the cunningest creature! As full of wiles and stratagems in order to get his own way — in benevolent objects — as men who set up to be clever are for selfish ones. Mrs. Hartopp was certainly a good woman, but a *made* good woman.

Married to another man, I suspect that she would have been a shrew. Petruchio would never have tamed her, I'll swear. But she, poor lady, had been gradually, but completely, subdued, subjugated, absolutely cowed beneath the weight of her spouse's despotic mildness; for in Hartopp there *was* a weight of soft quietude, of placid oppression, wholly irresistible. It would have buried a Titaness under a Pelion of moral featherbeds. Mass upon mass of downy influence descended upon you, seemingly yielding as it fell, enveloping, overbearing, stifling you — not presenting a single hard point of contact — giving in as you pushed against it — suppling itself seductively round you, softer and softer, heavier and heavier, till, I assure you, ma'am, no matter how high your natural wifely spirit, you would have had it smothered out of you, your last rebellious murmur dying languidly away under the descending fleeces.

"So kind in you to come with me, Mary," said Hartopp. "I could not have been happy without your approval — look at the child — something about her like Mary Anne, and Mary Anne is the picture of you!"

Waife advanced, uncovering; the two children, having lost trace of the butterfly, had run up towards Sophy. But her shy look made themselves shy — shyness is so contagious — and they stood a little

aloof, gazing at her. Sir Isaac stalked direct to the Mayor, sniffed at him, and wagged his tail.

Mrs. Hartopp now bent over Sophy, and acknowledging that the face was singularly pretty, glanced graciously towards her husband, and said, "I see the likeness!" then to Sophy, "I fear you are tired, my dear; you must not over-fatigue yourself — and you must take milk fresh from the cow every morning." And now the bailiff's wife came briskly out, a tidy, fresh-coloured, kind-faced woman, fond of children — the more so because she had none of her own.

So they entered the farmyard — Mrs. Hartopp being the chief talker; and she, having pointed out to Sophy the cows and the turkeys, the hencoops and the great China gander, led her by the one hand — while Sophy's other hand clung firmly to Waife's — across the little garden, with its patent beehives, into the house, took off her bonnet, and kissed her. "Very like Mary Anne! — Mary Anne, dear." One of the two children owning that name approached — snub-nosed, black-eyed, with cheeks like peonies. "This little girl, my Mary Anne, was as pale as you — over-study; and now, my dear child, you must try and steal a little of her colour. Don't you think my Mary Anne is like her papa, Mr. Chapman?"

"Like me!" exclaimed the Mayor; whispering Waife — "image of her mother! — the same intellectual look!"

Said the artful actor, "Indeed, ma'am, the young lady has her father's mouth and eyebrows, but that acute, sensible expression is yours — quite yours. Sir Isaac, make a bow to the young lady, and then, sir, go through the sword-exercise!"

The dog, put upon his tricks, delighted the children; and the poor actor, though his heart lay in his breast like lead, did his best to repay benevolence by mirth. Finally, much pleased, Mrs. Hartopp took her husband's arm to depart. The children, on being separated from Sir Isaac, began to cry. The Mayor interrupted his wife — who, if left to herself, would have scolded them into worse crying — told Mary Anne that he relied on her strong intellect to console her brother Tom; observed to Tom that it was not like his manly nature to set an example of weeping to his sister; and contrived thus to flatter their tears away in a trice, and sent them forward in a race to the turnstile.

Waife and Sophy were alone in the cottage parlour, — Mrs. Gooch, the bailiff's wife, walking part of the way back with the good couple, in order to show the Mayor a heifer who had lost appetite and taken to moping. "Let us steal out into the back garden, my darling," said Waife. "I see an arbour there, where I will compose myself with a pipe, a liberty I should not like to take in-doors." They stepped across the threshold, and gained the arbour,

which stood at the extreme end of the small kitchen-garden, and commanded a pleasant view of pastures and cornfields, backed by the blue outline of distant hills. Afar were faintly heard the laugh of the Mayor's happy children, now and then a tinkling sheep-bell, or the tap of the woodpecker, unrepressed by the hush of the midmost summer, which stills the more tuneful choristers amidst their coverts. Waife lighted his pipe, and smoked silently; Sophy, resting her head on his bosom, silent also. She was exquisitely sensitive to nature; the quiet beauty of all round her was soothing a spirit lately troubled, and health came stealing gently back through frame and through heart. At length she cried softly — "We could be so happy here, grandfather! It cannot last, can it?"

"'Tis no use in this life, my dear," returned Waife, philosophising; "no use at all disturbing present happiness by asking 'can it last!' To-day is man's, to-morrow his Maker's. But tell me frankly do you really dislike so much the idea of exhibiting? I don't mean as we did in Mr. Rugge's show. I know you hate that; but in a genteel private way, as the other night. You sigh! Out with it."

"I like what you like, Grandy."

"That's not true. I like to smoke; you don't. Come, you do dislike acting? Why? you do it so well — wonderfully. Generally speaking, people like what they do well."

"It is not the acting itself, Grandy, dear, that I don't like. When I am in some part I am carried away — I am not myself. I am some one else!"

"And the applause?"

"I don't feel it. I daresay I should miss it if it did not come; but it does not seem to me as if *I* were applauded. If I felt that, I should stop short, and get frightened. It is as if that somebody else into whom I was changed was making friends with the audience; and all my feeling is for that somebody — just as, Grandy dear, when it is over, and we two are alone together, all my feeling is for you — at least (hanging her head) it used to be; but lately, somehow, I am ashamed to think how I have been feeling for myself more than for you. Is it — is it that I *am* growing selfish? as Mr. Mayor said. Oh, no. Now we are here — not in those noisy towns — not in the inns and on the highways; — now *here, here*, I do feel again for you — all for you!"

"You are my little angel, you are," said Waife, tremulously. "Selfish! you! a good joke that! Now you see, I am not what is called Demonstrative — a long word, Sophy, which means, that I don't show to you always how fond I am of you; and, indeed," he added ingenuously, "I am not always aware of it myself; I like the applause, and the lights, and the excitement, and the illusion — the make-belief of the

whole thing; it takes me out of memory and thought — it is a world that has neither past, present, nor future, an interlude in time — an escape from space. I suppose it is the same with poets when they are making verses. Yes, I like all this; and when I think of it, I forget you too much. And I never observed, Heaven forgive me, that you were pale and drooping, till it was pointed out to me. Well, take away your arms. Let us consult! As soon as you get quite, quite well — how shall we live? what shall we do? You are as wise as a little woman, and such a careful, prudent housekeeper; and I'm such a harumscarum old fellow, without a sound idea in my head. What shall we do if we give up acting altogether?"

"Give up acting altogether, when you like it so! No — no. I will like it too, Grandy. But — but —" she stopped short, afraid to imply blame or to give pain.

"But what — let us make clean breasts, one to the other; tell truth, and shame the Father of Lies."

"Tell truth —" said Sophy, lifting up to him her pure eyes with such heavenly loving-kindness, that if the words did imply reproof, the eyes stole it away. "Could we but manage to tell truth off the stage, I should not dislike acting! Oh, grandfather, when that kind gentleman and his lady and those merry children

come up and speak to us, don't you feel ready to creep into the earth? — I do. Are we telling truth? are we living truth? one name to-day, another name to-morrow? I should not mind acting on a stage or in a room, for the time, but always acting, always — we ourselves 'makebeliefs!' Grandfather, must that be! *They* don't do it; I mean by they, all who are good and looked up to and respected, as — as — Oh, Grandy — Grandy — what am I saying? I have pained you."

Waife indeed was striving hard to keep down emotion; but his lips were set firmly and the blood had left them, and his hands were trembling.

"We *must* hide ourselves," he said in a very low voice, "we must take false names — I — because — because of reasons I can't tell even to you — and you, because I failed to get you a proper home, where you ought to be; and there is one who, if he pleases, and he may please it any day, could take you away from me, if he found you out — and so — and so." He paused abruptly, looked at her fearful wondering soft face, and rising, drew himself up with one of those rare outbreaks of dignity which elevated the whole character of his person. "But as for me," said he, "if I have lost all name, — if while I live, I must be this wandering, skulking outcast — look above, Sophy — look up above, there all secrets will be

known — all hearts read — and there my best hope to find a place in which I may wait your coming, is, in what has lost me all birthright here. Not to exalt myself do I say this — no; but that you may have comfort, darling, if ever hereafter you are pained by what men say to you of me.”

As he spoke, the expression of his face, at first solemn and lofty, relaxed into melancholy submission. Then passing his arm into hers, and leaning on it as if sunk once more into the broken cripple needing her frail support, he drew her forth from the arbour, and paced the little garden slowly, painfully. At length he seemed to recover himself, and said in his ordinary cheerful tone, “But to the point in question, suppose we have done with acting and roaming, and keep to one name, and settle somewhere like plain folks, again I ask — how shall we live?”

“I have been thinking of that,” answered Sophy. “You remember that those good Miss Burtons taught me all kinds of needlework, and I know people can make money by needlework. And then, Grandy dear, what can’t you do? Do you forget Mrs. Saunders’ books that you bound, and her cups and saucers that you mended. So we would both work, and have a little cottage and a garden, that we could take care of, and sell the herbs and vegetables. Oh, I have thought

over it all, the last fortnight, a hundred hundred times, only I did not dare to speak first."

Waife listened very attentively. "I can make very good baskets," said he, rubbing his chin, "famous baskets (if one could hire a bit of osier ground), and, as you say, there might be other fancy articles I could turn out prettily enough, and you could work samplers, and urn-rugs, and doyleys, and pin-cushions, and so forth; and what with a rood or two of garden ground, and poultry (the Mayor says poultry is healthy for children), upon my word, if we could find a safe place, and people would not trouble us with their gossip — and we could save a little money for you when I am —"

"Bees too — honey?" interrupted Sophy, growing more and more interested and excited.

"Yes, bees — certainly. A cottage of that kind in a village would not be above £ 6 a-year, and £ 20 spent on materials for fancyworks would set us up. Ah! but furniture — beds and tables — monstrous dear."

"O no, very little would do at first."

"Let us count the money we have left," said Waife, throwing himself down on a piece of sward that encircled a shady mulberry-tree. Old man and child counted the money, bit by bit, gaily yet anxiously

— babbling, interrupting each other — scheme upon scheme; they forgot past and present as much as in acting plays — they were absorbed in the future — innocent simple future — innocent as the future planned by two infants fresh from Robinson Crusoe or fairy tales.

“I remember — I remember; just the place for us,” cried Waife suddenly. “It is many, many, many years since I was there; I was courting my Lizzy at the time — alas — alas! But no sad thoughts now! — just the place, near a large town, but in a pretty village quite retired from it. ’Twas there I learned to make baskets. I had broken my leg — fall from a horse — nothing to do. I lodged with an old basket-maker; he had a capital trade. Rivulet at the back of his house; reeds, osiers, plentiful. I see them now, as I saw them from my little casement while my leg was setting. And Lizzy used to write to me such dear letters; my baskets were all for her. We had baskets enough to have furnished a house with baskets; could have dined in baskets, sat in baskets, slept in baskets. With a few lessons I could soon recover the knack of the work. I should like to see the place again; it would be shaking hands with my youth once more. None who could possibly recognise me could be now living. Saw no one but the surgeon, the basket-maker, and his wife; all so old, they must be

long since gathered to their fathers. Perhaps no one carries on the basket trade now. I may revive it and have it all to myself, perhaps the cottage itself may be easily hired." Thus, ever disposed to be sanguine, the vagabond chattered on, Sophy listening fondly, and smiling up to his face. "And a fine large park close by; the owners, great lords, deserted it then; perhaps it is deserted still. You might wander over it as if it were your own, Sophy. Such wonderful trees — such green solitudes; and pretty shy hares running across the vistas — stately deer too! We will make friends with the lodge-keepers, and we will call the park yours, Sophy; and I shall be a genius who weaves magical baskets, and you shall be the enchanted princess concealed from all evil eyes, knitting doyleys of pearl under leaves of emerald, and catching no sound from the world of perishable life, except as the boughs whisper and the birds sing."

"Dear me, here you are — we thought you were lost," said the bailiff's wife; "tea is waiting for you, and there's husband, sir, coming up from his work; he'll be proud and glad to know you, sir, and you too, my dear; we have no children of our own."

It is past eleven. Sophy, worn out, but with emotions far more pleasurable than she had long known, is fast asleep. Waife kneels by her side, looking at her. He touches her hand, so cool and

soft — all fever gone; he rises on tiptoe — he bends over her forehead — a kiss there, and a tear; he steals away, down, down the stairs. At the porch is the bailiff, holding Sir Isaac.

“We’ll take all care of her,” said Mr. Gooch. “You’ll not know her again when you come back.”

Waife pressed the hand of his grandchild’s host, but did not speak.

“You are sure you will find your way — no, that’s the wrong turn — straight on to the town. They’ll be sitting up for you at the Saracen’s Head, I suppose; of course, sir? It seems not hospitable like, your going away at the dead of night thus. But I understand you don’t like crying, sir — we men don’t; and your sweet little girl, I dare say, would sob, ready to break her heart, if she knew. Fine moonlight night, sir — straight on. And I say, don’t fret about her; wife loves children dearly — so do I. Good night.”

On went Waife — lamely, slowly — Sir Isaac’s white coat gleaming in the moon, ghostlike. On he went, bundle strapped across his shoulder, leaning on his staff, along by the folded sheep and the sleeping cattle. But when he got into the high-road, Gatesboro’ full before him, with all its roofs and spires, he turned his back on the town, and tramped once more along the desert thoroughfare — more slowly, and more; more lamely — and more; till several milestones were

passed; and then he crept through the gap of a hedgerow, to the sheltering eaves of a haystack; and under that roof-tree he and Sir Isaac lay down to rest.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Laugh at forebodings of evil, but tremble after daydreams of happiness.

Waife left behind him at the cottage two letters — one intrusted to the bailiff, with a sealed bag, for Mr. Hartopp — one for Sophy, placed on a chair beside her bed.

The first letter was as follows, —

“I trust, dear and honoured sir, that I shall come back safely; and when I do, I may have found perhaps a home for her, and some way of life such as you would not blame. But, in case of accident, I have left with Mr. Gooch, sealed up, the money we made at Gatesboro’, after paying the inn bill, doctor, &c., and retaining the mere trifle I need in case I and Sir Isaac fail to support ourselves. You will kindly take care of it. I should not feel safe with more money about me, an old man. I might be robbed; besides, I am careless. I never can keep money; it slips out of my hands like an eel. Heaven bless you, sir; your kindness seems like a miracle vouchsafed to me for that child’s dear sake. No evil can chance to her with

you; and if I should fall ill and die, even then you, who would have aided the tricksome vagrant, will not grudge the saving hand to the harmless child."

The letter to Sophy ran thus, —

"Darling, forgive me; I have stolen away from you, but only for a few days, and only in order to see if we cannot gain the magic home where I am to be the Genius, and you the Princess. I go forth with such a light heart, Sophy dear. I shall be walking thirty miles a-day, and not feel an ache in the lame leg; you could not keep up with me — you know you could not. So think over the cottage and the basket-work, and practise at samplers and pin-cushions, when it is too hot to play; and be stout and strong against I come back. That, I trust, will be this day week — 'tis but seven days; and then we will only act fairy dramas to nodding trees, with linnets for the orchestra; and even Sir Isaac shall not be demeaned by mercenary tricks, but shall employ his arithmetical talents in casting up the weekly bills, and he shall never stand on his hind-legs except on sunny days, when he shall carry a parasol to shade an enchanted princess. Laugh, darling — let me fancy I see you laughing; but don't fret — don't fancy I desert you. Do try and get well — quite, quite well; I ask it of you on my knees."

The letter and the bag were taken over at sunrise

to Mr. Hartopp's villa. Mr. Hartopp was an early man. Sophy overslept herself; her room was to the west; the morning beams did not reach its windows; and the cottage without children woke up to labour, noiseless and still. So when at last she shook off sleep, and tossing her hair from her blue eyes, looked round and became conscious of the strange place, she still fancied the hour early. But she got up, drew the curtain from the window, saw the sun high in the heavens, and, ashamed of her laziness, turned, and lo! the letter on the chair! Her heart at once misgave her; the truth flashed upon a reason prematurely quick in the intuition which belongs to the union of sensitive affection and active thought. She drew a long breath, and turned deadly pale. It was some minutes before she could take up the letter, before she could break the seal. When she did, she read on noiselessly, her tears dropping over the page, without effort or sob. She had no egotistical sorrow, no grief in being left alone with strangers; it was the pathos of the old man's lonely wanderings, of his bereavement, of his counterfeit glee, and genuine self-sacrifice — this it was that suffused her whole heart with unutterable yearnings of tenderness, gratitude, pity, veneration. But when she had wept silently for some time, she kissed the letter with devout passion, and turned to that Heaven to which the outcast had taught her first to pray.

Afterwards she stood still, musing a little while,

and the sorrowful shade gradually left her face. Yes; she would obey him — she would not fret — she would try and get well and strong. He would feel, at the distance, that she was true to his wishes — that she was fitting herself to be again his companion; — seven days would soon pass. Hope, that can never long quit the heart of childhood, brightened over her meditations, as the morning sun over a landscape that, just before, had lain sad amidst twilight and under rains.

When she came down stairs, Mrs. Gooch was pleased and surprised to observe the placid smile upon her face, and the quiet activity with which, after the morning meal, she moved about by the good woman's side, assisting her in her dairy-work and other housewife tasks, talking little, comprehending quickly — composed, cheerful.

"I am so glad to see you don't pine after your good grandpapa, as we feared you would."

"He told me not to pine," answered Sophy, simply, but with a quivering lip.

When the noon deepened, and it became too warm for exercise, Sophy timidly asked if Mrs. Gooch had any worsteds and knitting-needles, and being accommodated with those implements and materials, she withdrew to the arbour, and seated herself to work — solitary and tranquil.

What made, perhaps, the chief strength in this poor

child's nature, was its intense trustfulness — a part perhaps, of its instinctive appreciation of truth. She trusted in Waife — in the Future — in Providence — in her own childish, not helpless, self. Already, as her slight fingers sorted the worsteds, and her graceful taste shaded their hues into blended harmony, her mind was weaving, not less harmoniously, the hues in the woof of dreams: the cottage home — the harmless tasks — Waife, with his pipe, in the arm-chair, under some porch, covered, like that one yonder — why not? — with fragrant wood-bine. And life, if humble, honest, truthful, not shrinking from the day, so that, if Lionel met her again, she should not blush, nor he be shocked. And if their ways were so different as her grandfather said, still they might cross, as they had crossed before, and — the work slid from her hand — the sweet lips parted, smiling; — a picture came before her eyes — her grandfather, Lionel, herself; all three, friends, and happy; a stream, fair as the Thames had seemed — green trees all bathed in summer — the boat gliding by; in that boat they three, borne softly on — away — away — what matters whither? — by her side the old man; — facing her, the boy's bright, kind eyes. She started. She heard noises — a swinging gate — footsteps. She started — she rose — voices; — one strange to her — a man's voice, — then the Mayor's. A third voice — shrill, stern; — a terrible voice — heard in infancy — associated with

images of cruelty, misery, woe. It could not be! — impossible! Near — nearer came the footsteps. Seized with the impulse of flight, she sprang to the mouth of the arbour. Fronting her, glared two dark, baleful eyes. She stood — arrested — spell-bound — as a bird fixed rigid by the gaze of a serpent.

“Yes, Mr. Mayor; all right! — it *is* our little girl — our dear Sophy. This way, Mr. Losely. Such a pleasant surprise for you, Sophy, my love!” said Mrs. Crane.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

In the kindest natures there is a certain sensitiveness, which, when wounded, occasions the same pain, and bequeathes the same resentment, as mortified vanity or galled self-love.

It is exactly that day week, towards the hour of five in the evening, Mr. Hartopp, alone in the parlour behind his warehouse, is locking up his books and ledgers preparatory to the return to his villa. There is a certain change in the expression of his countenance since we saw it last. If it be possible for Mr. Hartopp to look sullen — sullen he looks; if it be possible for the Mayor of Gatesboro' to be crestfallen — crestfallen he is. That smooth existence has surely received some fatal concussion, and has not yet recovered the shock. But, if you will glance beyond the parlour at Mr. Williams giving orders in the warehouse, at the warehousemen themselves, at the rough faces in the tan-yard —

nay, at Mike Callaghan; who has just brought a parcel from the railway, all of them have evidently shared in the effects of the concussion; all of them wear a look more or less sullen; all seem crest-fallen. Nay, could you carry your gaze farther on — could you peep into the shops in the High Street, or at the loungers in the city reading-room; could you extend the vision farther still — to Mr. Hartopp's villa, behold his wife, his little ones, his men-servants, and his maid-servants — more and more impressively general would become the tokens of disturbance occasioned by that infamous concussion. Everywhere a sullen look — everywhere that ineffable aspect of crestfallenness! What can have happened? is the good man bankrupt? No — rich as ever! What can it be? Reader, that fatal event which they who love Josiah Hartopp are ever at watch to prevent, despite all their vigilance, has occurred! Josiah Hartopp has been TAKEN IN! Other men may be occasionally taken in, and no one mourns — perhaps they deserve it! they are not especially benevolent, or they set up to be specially wise. But to take in that Lamb! And it was not only the Mayor's heart that was wounded, but his pride, his self-esteem, his sense of dignity, were terribly humiliated. For as we know, though all the world considered Mr. Hartopp the very man born to be taken in, and therefore combined to protect him, yet in his secret soul Mr. Hartopp considered that no man less needed such protection; that

he was never taken in, unless he meant to be so. Thus the cruelty and ingratitude of the base action under which his crest was so fallen, jarred on his whole system. Nay, more, he could not but feel that the event would long affect his personal comfort and independence; he would be more than ever under the affectionate tyranny of Mr. Williams — more than ever be an object of universal surveillance and espionage. There would be one thought paramount throughout Gatesboro'. "The Mayor, God bless him! has been taken in — this must not occur again! or Gatesboro' is dishonoured, and Virtue indeed a name!" Mr. Hartopp felt not only mortified but subjugated — he who had hitherto been the soft subjugator of the hardest. He felt not only subjugated, but indignant at the consciousness of being so. He was too meekly convinced of Heaven's unerring justice not to feel assured that the man who had taken him in would come to a tragic end. He would not have hanged that man with his own hands — he was too mild for vengeance. But if he had seen that man hanging, he would have said piously, "Fitting retribution," and passed on his way soothed and comforted. Taken in! — taken in at last! — he, Josiah Hartopp, taken in by a fellow with one eye!

CHAPTER II.

The Mayor is so protected that he cannot help himself.

A commotion without — a kind of howl — a kind of hoot. Mr. Williams — the warehousemen, the tanners, Mike Callaghan, share between them the howl and the hoot. The Mayor started — is it possible! His door is burst open, and, scattering all who sought to hold him back — scattering them to the right and left from his massive torso, in rushed the man who had taken in the Mayor — the fellow with one eye, and with that fellow, shaggy and travel-soiled, the other dog!

“What have you done with the charge I intrusted to you? My child — my child — where is she?”

Waife's face was wild with the agony of his emotions, and his voice was so sharply terrible that it went like a knife into the heart of the men, who, thrust aside for the moment, now followed him, fearful, into the room.

“Mr. — Mr. Chapman, sir,” faltered the Mayor, striving hard to recover dignity and self-possession. “I am astonished at your — your —”

"Audacity!" interposed Mr. Williams.

"My child — my Sophy — my child! answer me, man!"

"Sir," said the Mayor, drawing himself up, "have you not got the note which I left at my bailiff's cottage in case you called there?"

"Your note — this thing!" said Waife, striking a crumpled paper with his hand, and running his eye over its contents. "You have rendered up, you say, the child to her lawful protector? Gracious heavens! did *I* trust her to you, or not?"

"Leave the room all of you," said the Mayor, with a sudden return of his usual calm vigour.

"You go — you, sirs; what the deuce do you do here?" growled Williams to the meaner throng. "Out! — I stay; never fear, men, I'll take care of him!"

The bystanders surlily slinked off, but none returned to their work; they stood within reach of call by the shut door. Williams tucked up his coat-sleeves, clenched his fists, hung his head doggedly on one side, and looked altogether so pugnacious and minatory, that Sir Isaac, who, though in a state of great excitement, had hitherto retained self-control, peered at him under his curls, stiffened his back, showed his teeth, and growled formidably.

"My good Williams, leave us," said the Mayor; "I would be alone with this person."

"Alone — you! out of the question. Now you have been once taken in, and you own it — it is my duty to protect you henceforth; and I will to the end of my days."

The Mayor sighed heavily — "Well, Williams, well! — take a chair, and be quiet. Now, Mr. Chapman, so to call you still; you have deceived me."

"I — how?"

The Mayor was puzzled. "Deceived me," he said at last, "in my knowledge of human nature. I thought you an honest man, sir. And you are — but no matter."

WAIFE (impatiently). — "My child, my child! you have given her up to — to —"

MAYOR. — "Her own father, sir."

WAIFE (echoing the words as he staggers back). — "I thought so — I thought it!"

MAYOR. — "In so doing I obeyed the law — he had legal power to enforce his demand." The Mayor's voice was almost apologetic in its tone, for he was affected by Waife's anguish, and not able to silence a pang of remorse. After all, he had been trusted; and he had, excusably perhaps, necessarily perhaps, but still he *had* failed to fulfil the trust. "But," added the Mayor, as if reassuring himself — "but I refused at first to give her up, even to her own father; at first insisted upon waiting till your return; and it was only when I was informed what you yourself were, that my scruples gave way."

Waife remained long silent, breathing very hard, and passing his hand several times over his forehead; at last he said more quietly than he had yet spoken — “Will you tell me where they have gone?”

“I do not know, and if I did know, I would not tell you! Are they not right when they say that innocent child should not be tempted away by — by — a — in short, by you, sir?”

“*They* said! Her father — said that! — he said that! Did he — did *he* say it? Had he the heart?”

MAYOR. — “No, I don’t think he said it. Eh, Mr. Williams? He spoke little to me!”

Mr. WILLIAMS. — “Of course he would not expose that person. But the woman — the lady, I mean.”

WAIFE. — “Woman! Ah, yes. The bailiff’s wife said there was a woman. What woman? What’s her name?”

MAYOR. — “Really you must excuse me. I can say no more. I have consented to see you thus, because whatever you might have been, or may be, still it was due to myself to explain how I came to give up the child; and, besides, you left money with me, and *that*, at least, I can give to your own hand.”

The Mayor turned to his desk, unlocked it, and drew forth the bag which Waife had sent to him.

As he extended it towards the Comedian, his hand trembled and his cheek flushed. For Waife’s one bright

eye had in it such depth of reproach, that again the Mayor's conscience was sorely troubled, and he would have given ten times the contents of that bag to have been alone with the vagrant, and to have said the soothing things he did not dare to say before Williams, who sate there mute and grim, guarding him from being once more "taken in." "If you had confided in me at first, Mr. Chapman," he said pathetically, "or even if now, I could aid you in an honest way of life!"

"Aid him — now!" said Williams, with a snort. "At it again! you're not a man, you're an angel!"

"But if he is penitent, Williams."

"So! so! so," murmured Waife. "Thank Heaven it was not he who spoke against me — it was but a strange woman. Oh!" he suddenly broke off with a groan. "Oh — but that strange woman — who, what can she be? and Sophy with her and him. Distraction! Yes, yes, I take the money. I shall want it all. Sir Isaac, pick up that bag. Gentlemen, good day to you!" He bowed; such a failure that bow! Nothing ducal in it! bowed and turned towards the door; then, when he gained the threshold, as if some meeker, holier thought restored to him dignity of bearing, his form rose, though his face softened, and stretching his right hand towards the Mayor, he said: — "You did but as all perhaps would have done on the evidence before

you. You meant to be kind to her. If you knew all, how you would repent! I do not blame — I forgive you."

He was gone; the Mayor stood transfixed. Even Williams felt a cold comfortless thrill. "He does not look like it," said the foreman. "Cheer up, sir, no wonder you were taken in — who would not have been?"

"Hark! that hoot again. Go, Williams, don't let the men insult him. Do, do. I shall be grateful."

But before Williams got to the door, the cripple and his dog had vanished; vanished down a dark narrow alley on the opposite side of the street. The rude workmen had followed him to the mouth of the alley, mocking him. Of the exact charge against the Comedian's good name they were not informed; that knowledge was confined to the Mayor and Mr. Williams. But the latter had dropped such harsh expressions, that bad as the charge might really be, all in Mr. Hartopp's employment probably deemed it worse, if possible, than it really was. And wretch indeed must be the man by whom the Mayor had been confessedly taken in, and whom the Mayor had indignantly given up to the reproaches of his own conscience. But the cripple was now out of sight, lost amidst those labyrinths of squalid homes which, in great towns, are thrust beyond view, branching off abruptly behind High

Streets and Market Places, so that strangers passing only along the broad thoroughfares, with glittering shops and gas-lit causeways, — exclaim, “Where do the Poor live?”

CHAPTER III.

Ecce iterum Crispinus!

It was by no calculation, but by involuntary impulse, that Waife, thus escaping from the harsh looks and taunting murmurs of the gossips round the Mayor's door, dived into those sordid devious lanes. Vaguely he felt that a ban was upon him; that the covering he had thrown over his brand of outcast was lifted up; that a sentence of expulsion from the High Streets and Market Places of decorous life was passed against him. He had been robbed of his child, and Society, speaking in the voice of the Mayor of Gatesboro', said, "Rightly! thou art not fit companion for the innocent!"

At length he found himself out of the town, beyond its straggling suburbs, and once more on the solitary road. He had already walked far that day. He was thoroughly exhausted. He sate himself down in a dry ditch by the hedgerow, and taking his head between

his hands, strove to re-collect his thoughts, and rearrange his plans.

Waife had returned that day to the bailiff's cottage joyous and elated. He had spent the week in travelling — partly, though not all the way, on foot, to the distant village in which he had learned in youth the basket-maker's art! He had found the very cottage wherein he had then lodged, vacant, and to be let. There seemed a ready opening for the humble but pleasant craft to which he had diverted his ambition.

The bailiff intrusted with the letting of the cottage and osier-ground, had, it is true, requested some reference — not, of course, as to all a tenant's antecedents, but as to the reasonable probability that the tenant would be a quiet sober man, who would pay his rent, and abstain from poaching. Waife thought he might safely presume that the Mayor of Gatesboro' would not, so far as that went, object to take his past upon trust, and give him a good word towards securing so harmless and obscure a future. Waife had never before asked such a favour of any man; he shrunk from doing so now; but for his grandchild's sake, he would waive his scruples or humble his pride.

Thus, then, he had come back, full of Elysian

dreams, to his Sophy — his Enchanted Princess. Gone — taken away, and with the Mayor's consent — the consent of the very man upon whom he had been relying to secure a livelihood and a shelter! Little more had he learned at the cottage, for Mr. and Mrs. Gooch had been cautioned to be as brief as possible, and give him no clue to regain his lost treasure, beyond the note which informed him it was with a lawful possessor. And, indeed, the worthy pair were now prejudiced against the vagrant, and were rude to him. But he had not tarried to cross-examine and inquire. He had rushed at once to the Mayor. Sophy was with one whose legal right to dispose of her he could not question. But where that person would take her — where he resided — what he would do with her — he had no means to conjecture. Most probably (he thought and guessed) she would be carried abroad — was already out of the country. But the woman with Losely, he had not heard her described; his guesses did not turn towards Mrs. Crane; the woman was evidently hostile to him — it was the woman who had spoken against him — not Losely; the woman whose tongue had poisoned Hartopp's mind, and turned into scorn all that admiring respect which had before greeted the

great Comedian. Why was that woman his enemy? Who could she be? What had she to do with Sophy? He was half beside himself with terror. It was to save her less even from Losely than from such direful women as Losely made his confidants and associates, that Waife had taken Sophy to himself. As for Mrs. Crane, she had never seemed a foe to *him* — she had ceded the child to him willingly — he had no reason to believe, from the way in which she had spoken of Losely, when he last saw her, that she could henceforth aid the interests, or share the schemes, of the man whose perfidies she then denounced; and as to Rugge, he had not appeared at Gatesboro'. Mrs. Crane had prudently suggested that his presence would not be propitiatory or discreet, and that all reference to him, or to the contract with him, should be suppressed. Thus Waife was wholly without one guiding evidence — one groundwork for conjecture — that might enable him to track the lost; all he knew was, that she had been given up to a man, whose whereabouts it was difficult to discover — a vagrant, of life darker and more hidden than his own.

But how had the hunters discovered the place where he had treasured up his Sophy — how dogged that

retreat? Perhaps from the village in which we first saw him. Ay, doubtless, learned from Mrs. Saunders of the dog he had purchased, and the dog would have served to direct them on his path. At that thought he pushed away Sir Isaac, who had been resting his head on the old man's knee — pushed him away angrily; the poor dog slunk off in sorrowful surprise, and whined.

“Ungrateful wretch that I am!” cried Waife, and he opened his arms to the brute, who bounded forgivingly to his breast.

“Come, come, we will go back to the village in Surrey. Tramp, tramp!” said the cripple, rousing himself. And at that moment, just as he gained his feet, a friendly hand was laid on his shoulder, and a friendly voice said —

“I have found you! the crystal said so! Marvellous!”

“Merle,” faltered out the vagrant — “Merle, you here! Oh, perhaps you come to tell me good news: you have seen Sophy — you know where she is!”

The Cobbler shook his head. “Can’t see her just at present. Crystal says nout about her. But I know she was taken from you — and — and — you shake

tremenjous! Lean on me, Mr. Waife, and call off that big animal. He's a suspicating my calves, and circumtittyvating them. Thank ye, sir. You see I was born with sinister aspects in my Twelfth House, which appertains to big animals and enemies; — and dogs of that size about one's calves are — malefics!"

As Merle now slowly led the cripple, and Sir Isaac, relinquishing his first suspicions, walked droopingly beside them, the Cobbler began a long story, much encumbered by astrological illustrations and moralising comments. The substance of his narrative is thus epitomised: Rugge, in pursuing Waife's track, had naturally called on Merle in company with Losely and Mrs. Crane. The Cobbler had no clue to give, and no mind to give it, if clue he had possessed. But his curiosity being roused, he had smothered the inclination to dismiss the inquirers with more speed than good-breeding, and even refreshed his slight acquaintance with Mr. Rugge in so well simulated a courtesy, that that gentleman, when left behind by Losely and Mrs. Crane in their journey to Gatesboro', condescended, for want of other company, to drink tea with Mr. Merle; and tea being succeeded by stronger potations, he fairly unbosomed himself of his hopes

of recovering Sophy, and his ambition of hiring the York theatre.

The day afterwards, Rugge went away seemingly in high spirits, and the Cobbler had no doubt, from some words he let fall in passing Merle's stall towards the railway, that Sophy was recaptured, and that Rugge was summoned to take possession of her. Ascertaining from the manager that Losely and Mrs. Crane had gone to Gatesboro', the Cobbler called to mind that he had a sister living there, married to a greengrocer in a very small way, whom he had not seen for many years; and finding his business slack just then, he resolved to pay this relative a visit, with the benevolent intention of looking up Waife, whom he expected, from Rugge's account, to find there, and offering him any consolation or aid in his power, should Sophy have been taken from him against his will. A consultation with his crystal, which showed him the face of Mr. Waife alone, and much dejected, and a horary scheme which promised success to his journey, decided his movements. He had arrived at Gatesboro' the day before, had heard a confused story about a Mr. Chapman, with his dog and his child, whom the Mayor had first taken up, but who afterwards, in some mysterious

manner, had taken in the Mayor. Happily, the darker gossip in the High Street had not penetrated the back lane in which Merle's sister resided. There, little more was known than the fact that this mysterious stranger had imposed on the wisdom of Gatesboro's learned Institute and enlightened Mayor. Merle, at no loss to identify Waife with Chapman, could only suppose that he had been discovered to be a strolling player in Rugge's exhibition, after pretending to be some much greater man. Such an offence the Cobbler was not disposed to consider heinous. But Mr. Chapman was gone from Gatesboro', none knew whither; and Merle had not yet ventured to call himself on the chief magistrate of the place, to inquire after a man by whom that august personage had been deceived. "Howsomever," quoth Merle, in conclusion, "I was just standing at my sister's door, with her last babby in my arms, in Scrob Lane, when I saw you pass by like a shot. You were gone while I ran in to give up the babby, who is teething, with malefics in square — gone — clean out of sight. You took one turn, I took another; but you see we meet at last, as good men always do in this world — or the other, which is the same thing in the long run."

Waife, who had listened to his friend without other interruption than an occasional nod of the head or interjectional expletive, was now restored to much of his constitutional mood of sanguine cheerfulness. He recognised Mrs. Crane in the woman described, and if surprised, he was rejoiced. For much as he disliked that gentlewoman, he thought Sophy might be in worse female hands. Without much need of sagacity, he divined the gist of the truth. Losely had somehow or other become acquainted with Rugge, and sold Sophy to the manager. Where Rugge was, there would Sophy be. It could not be very difficult to find out the place in which Rugge was now exhibiting; and then — ah then! Waife whistled to Sir Isaac, tapped his forehead, and smiled triumphantly. Meanwhile the Cobbler had led him back into the suburb, with the kind intention of offering him food and bed for the night at his sister's house. But Waife had already formed his plan; in London, and in London alone, could he be sure to learn where Rugge was now exhibiting; in London there were places at which that information could be gleaned at once. The last train to the metropolis was not gone. He would slink round

the town to the station; he and Sir Isaac at that hour might secure places unnoticed.

When Merle found it was in vain to press him to stay over the night, the good-hearted Cobbler accompanied him to the train, and, while Waife shrunk into a dark corner, bought the tickets for dog and master. As he was paying for these, he overheard two citizens talking of Mr. Chapman. It was indeed Mr. Williams explaining to a fellow-burgess just returned to Gatesboro', after a week's absence, how and by what manner of man Mr. Hartopp had been taken in. At what Williams said, the Cobbler's cheek paled. When he joined the Comedian, his manner was greatly altered; he gave the tickets without speaking, but looked hard into Waife's face, as the latter repaid him the fares. "No," said the Cobbler suddenly, "I don't believe it."

"Believe what?" asked Waife, startled.

"That you are —"

The Cobbler paused, bent forward, and whispered the rest of the sentence close in the vagrant's ear. Waife's head fell on his bosom, but he made no answer.

"Speak," cried Merle; "say 't is a lie." The poor cripple's lip writhed, but he still spoke not.

Merle looked aghast at that obstinate silence. At length, but very slowly, as the warning bell summoned him and Sir Isaac to their several places in the train, Waife found voice. "So you too, you too desert and despise me! God's will be done!" He moved away — spiritless, limping, hiding his face as well as he could. The porter took the dog from him, to thrust it into one of the boxes reserved for such four-footed passengers.

Waife, thus parted from his last friend — I mean the dog — looked after Sir Isaac wistfully, and crept into a third-class carriage, in which luckily there was no one else. Suddenly Merle jumped in, snatched his hand, and pressed it tightly. "I don't despise, I don't turn my back on you; whenever you and the little one want a home and a friend, come to Kit Merle as before, and I'll bite my tongue out if I ask any more questions of you; I'll ask the stars instead."

The Cobbler had but just time to splutter out these comforting words, and redescend the carriage, when the train put itself into movement, and the lifelike iron miracle, fuming, hissing, and screeching, bore

off to London its motley convoy of human beings, each passenger's heart a mystery to the other, all bound the same road, all wedged close within the same whirling mechanism: what a separate and distinct world in each! Such is Civilisation! How like we are one to the other in the mass! how strangely dissimilar in the abstract!

CHAPTER IV.

“If,” says a great thinker (DEGERANDO, *Du Perfectionnement Moral*, chap. ix., “On the Difficulties we encounter in Self Study”) — “If one concentrates reflection too much on oneself, one ends by no longer seeing anything, or seeing only what one wishes. By the very act, as it were, of capturing oneself, the personage we believe we have seized, escapes, disappears. Nor is it only the complexity of our inner being which obstructs our examination, but its exceeding variability. The investigator’s regard should embrace all the sides of the subject, and perseveringly pursue all its phases.”

It is the race-week in Humberston, a county town far from Gatesboro’, and in the north of England. The races last three days; the first day is over; it has been a brilliant spectacle; the course crowded with the carriages of provincial magnates, with equestrian betters of note from the metropolis; blacklegs in great muster; there have been gaming-booths on the ground, and gypsies telling fortunes; much champagne imbibed by

the wellbred, much soda-water and brandy by the vulgar. Thousands and tens of thousands have been lost and won; some paupers been for the time enriched; some rich men made poor for life. Horses have won fame; some of their owners lost character. Din and uproar, and coarse oaths, and rude passions — all have had their hour. The amateurs of the higher classes have gone back to dignified country-houses, as courteous hosts or favoured guests. The professional speculators of a lower grade have poured back into the county town, and inns and taverns are crowded. Drink is hotly called for at reeking bars; waiters and chambermaids pass to and fro, with dishes, and tankards, and bottles in their hands. All is noise and bustle, and eating and swilling, and disputation and slang, wild glee, and wilder despair, amongst those who come back from the race-course to the inns in the county town. At one of these taverns, neither the best nor the worst, and in a small narrow slice of a room that seemed robbed from the landing-place, sate Mrs. Crane, in her iron-grey silk gown. She was seated close by the open window, as carriages, chaises, flies, carts, vans, and horsemen succeeded each other thick and fast, watching the scene with a soured, scornful look.

For human joy, as for human grief, she had little sympathy. Life had no Saturnalian holidays left for her. Some memory in her past had poisoned the well springs of her social being. Hopes and objects she had still, but out of the wrecks of the natural and healthful existence of womanhood, those objects and hopes stood forth exaggerated, intense, as are the ruling passions in monomania. A bad woman is popularly said to be worse than a wicked man. If so, partly because women, being more solitary, brood more unceasingly over cherished ideas, whether good or evil; partly also, for the same reason that makes a wicked gentleman, who has lost caste and character, more irreclaimable than a wicked clown, low-born and low-bred, viz. that in proportion to the loss of shame is the gain in recklessness; but principally, perhaps, because in extreme wickedness there is necessarily a distortion of the reasoning faculty; and man, accustomed from the cradle rather to reason than to feel, has that faculty more firm against abrupt twists and lesions than it is in woman; where virtue may have left him, logic may still linger, and he may decline to push evil to a point at which it is clear to his understanding that profit

vanishes and punishment rests; while woman, once abandoned to ill, finds sufficient charm in its mere excitement; and, regardless of consequences, where the man asks, "Can I?" raves out, "I will!" Thus man may be criminal through cupidity, vanity, love, jealousy, fear, ambition, rarely in civilised, that is, reasoning life, through hate and revenge; for hate is a profitless investment, and revenge a ruinous speculation. But when women are thoroughly depraved and hardened, nine times out of ten it is hatred or revenge that makes them so. Arabella Crane had not, however, attained to that last state of wickedness, which, consistent in evil, is callous to remorse; she was not yet unsexed. In her nature was still that essence, "varying and mutable," which distinguishes woman while womanhood is left to her. And now, as she sate gazing on the throng below, her haggard mind recoiled perhaps from the conscious shadow of the Evil Principle which, invoked as an ally, remains as a destroyer. Her dark front relaxed; she moved in her seat uneasily. "Must it be always thus!" she muttered — "always this hell here! Even now, if in one large pardon I could include the undoer, the earth, myself,

and again be human — human, even as those slight triflers or coarse brawlers that pass yonder! Oh for something in common with common life!”

Her lips closed, and her eyes again fell upon the crowded street. At that moment three or four heavy vans or waggons filled with operatives or labourers and their wives, coming back from the race-course, obstructed the way; two outriders with satin jackets were expostulating, cracking their whips, and seeking to clear space for an open carriage with four thoroughbred impatient horses. Towards that carriage every gazer from the windows was directing eager eyes; each foot-passenger on the pavement lifted his hat — evidently in that carriage some great person! Like all who are at war with the world as it is, Arabella Crane abhorred the great, and despised the small for worshipping the great. But still her own fierce dark eyes mechanically followed those of the vulgar. The carriage bore a marquess's coronet on its panels, and was filled with ladies: two other carriages bearing a similar coronet, and evidently belonging to the same party, were in the rear. Mrs. Crane started. In that first carriage, as it now slowly moved under her very window, and paused a minute or more, till the ob-

structing vehicles in front were marshalled into order — there flashed upon her eyes a face radiant with female beauty in its most glorious prime. Amongst the crowd at that moment was a blind man, adding to the various discords of the street by a miserable hurdy-gurdy. In the movement of the throng to get nearer to a sight of the ladies in the carriage, this poor creature was thrown forward; the dog that led him, an ugly brute, on his own account or his master's, took fright, broke from the string, and ran under the horses' hoofs, snarling. The horses became restive; the blind man made a plunge after his dog, and was all but run over. The lady in the first carriage, alarmed for his safety, rose up from her seat, and made her outriders dismount, lead away the poor blind man, and restore to him his dog. Thus engaged, her face shone full upon Arabella Crane; and with that face rushed a tide of earlier memories. Long, very long, since she had seen that face, — seen it in those years when she herself, Arabella Crane, was young and handsome.

The poor man — who seemed not to realise the idea of the danger he had escaped — once more safe, the lady resumed her seat; and now that the momentary animation of humane fear and womanly compassion

passed from her countenance, its expression altered; it took the calm, almost the coldness, of a Greek statue. But with the calm there was a listless melancholy which Greek sculpture never gives to the Parian stone; stone cannot convey that melancholy — it is the shadow which needs for its substance a living, mortal heart.

Crack went the whips; the horses bounded on — the equipage rolled fast down the street, followed by its satellites. “Well!” said a voice in the street below, “I never saw Lady Montfort in such beauty. Ah, here comes my lord!”

Mrs. Crane heard and looked forth again. A dozen or more gentlemen on horseback rode slowly up the street; which of these was Lord Montfort? — not difficult to distinguish. As the bystanders lifted their hats to the cavalcade, the horsemen generally returned the salutation by simply touching their own — one horseman uncovered wholly. That one must be the Marquess, the greatest man in those parts, with lands stretching away on either side that town for miles and miles; a territory which, in feudal times, might have alarmed a king. He, the civilest, must be the greatest. A man still young, decidedly good-looking, wonderfully well-dressed, wonderfully well-mounted, the careless ease of

high rank in his air and gesture. To the superficial gaze, just what the great Lord of Montfort should be. Look again! In that fair face is there not something that puts you in mind of a florid period which contains a feeble platitude? — something in its very prettiness that betrays a weak nature, and a sterile mind?

The cavalcade passed away — the vans and the waggons again usurped the thoroughfare. Arabella Crane left the window, and approached the little looking-glass over the mantelpiece. She gazed upon her own face bitterly — she was comparing it with the features of the dazzling Marchioness.

The door was flung open, and Jasper Losely sauntered in, whistling a French air, and flapping the dust from his boots with his kid glove.

“All right,” said he, gaily. “A famous day of it!”

“You have won,” said Mrs. Crane, in a tone rather of disappointment than congratulation.

“Yes. That £ 100 of Rugge’s has been the making of me. I only wanted a capital just to start with!” He flung himself into a chair, opened his pocket-book, and scrutinised its contents. “Guess,” said he, suddenly, “on whose horse I won these two

rouleaux? Lord Montfort's! Ay, and I saw my lady!"

"So did I see her, from this window. She did not look happy!"

"Not happy! — with such an equipage! neatest turn-out I ever set eyes on; not happy, indeed! I had half a mind to ride up to her carriage and advance a claim to her gratitude."

"Gratitude! Oh, for your part in that miserable affair of which you told me?"

"Not a miserable affair for her — but certainly *I* never got any good from it. Trouble for nothing! *Basta*. No use looking back."

"No use; but who can help it!" said Arabella Crane, sighing heavily; then, as if eager to change the subject, she added abruptly, "Mr. Rugge has been here twice this morning, highly excited — the child will not act. He says you are bound to make her do so!"

"Nonsense. That is his look out. *I* see after children, indeed!"

MRS. CRANE (with a visible effort). — "Listen to me, Jasper Losely. I have no reason to love that child, as you may suppose. But now that you so

desert her, I think I feel compassion for her; and when, this morning, I raised my hand to strike her for her stubborn spirit, and saw her eyes unflinching, and her pale, pale, but fearless face, my arm fell to my side powerless. She will not take to this life without the old man. She will waste away and die."

LOSELY. — "How you bother me! Are you serious? What am I to do?"

MRS. CRANE. — "You have won money, you say; revoke the contract; pay Rugge back his £ 100. He is disappointed in his bargain; he will take the money."

LOSELY. — "I daresay he will, indeed. No — I have won to-day, it is true, but I may lose to-morrow, and, besides, I am in want of so many things; when one gets a little money, one has an immediate necessity for more — ha! ha! Still I would not have the child die; and she may grow up to be of use. I tell you what I will do; if, when the races are over, I find I have gained enough to afford it, I will see about buying her off. But £ 100 is too much! Rugge ought to take half the money, or a quarter, because, if she don't act, I suppose she does eat."

Odious as the man's words were, he said them with a laugh that seemed to render them less revolting — the laugh of a very handsome mouth, showing teeth still brilliantly white. More comely than usual that day, for he was in great good-humour, it was difficult to conceive that a man with so healthful and fair an exterior was really quite rotten at heart.

“Your own young laugh!” said Arabella Crane, almost tenderly. “I know not how it is, but this day I feel as if I were less old — altered though I be in face and mind. I have allowed myself to pity that child; while I speak, I can pity you. Yes! pity — when I think of what you were. Must you go on thus? To what! Jasper Losely,” she continued sharply, eagerly, clasping her hands — “hear me — I have an income not large, it is true, but assured; you have nothing but what, as you say, you may lose to-morrow; share my income! Fulfil your solemn promises — marry me. I will forget whose daughter that girl is — I will be a mother to her. And for yourself, give me the right to feel for you again as I once did, and I may find a way to raise you yet — higher than you can raise yourself. I have some wit,

Jasper, as you know. At the worst you shall have the pastime — I, the toil. In your illness I will nurse you; in your joys I will intrude no share. Whom else can you marry? to whom else could you confide? who else could —”

She stopped short as if an adder had stung her, uttering a shriek of rage, of pain; for Jasper Losely, who had hitherto listened to her, stupified, astounded, here burst into a fit of merriment, in which there was such undisguised contempt, such an enjoyment of the ludicrous, provoked by the idea of the marriage pressed upon him, that the insult pierced the woman to her very soul.

Continuing his laugh, despite that cry of wrathful agony it had caused, Jasper rose, holding his sides, and surveying himself in the glass, with very different feelings at the sight from those that had made his companion's gaze there a few minutes before so mournful.

“My dear good friend,” he said, composing himself at last, and wiping his eyes, “excuse me, but really when you said whom else could I marry — ha! ha! — it did seem such a capital joke! Marry you, my fair Crane! No — put that idea out of your head —

we know each other too well for conjugal felicity. You love me now; you always did, and always will — that is, while we are not tied to each other. Women who once love me, always love me — can't help themselves. I am sure I don't know why, except that I am what they call a villain! Ha! the clock striking seven — I dine with a set of fellows I have picked up on the race-ground; they don't know me, nor I them; we shall be better acquainted after the third bottle. Cheer up, Crane; go and scold Sophy, and make her act if you can; if not, scold Rugge into letting her alone. Scold somebody — nothing like it, to keep other folks quiet, and oneself busy. Adieu! and pray, no more matrimonial solicitations — they frighten me! Gad," added Losely, as he banged the door, "such overtures would frighten Old Nick himself!"

Did Arabella Crane hear those last words — or had she not heard enough? If Losely had turned and beheld her face, would it have startled back his trivial laugh? Possibly; but it would have caused only a momentary uneasiness. If Alecto herself had reared over him her brow horrent with vipers, Jasper Losely would have thought he had only to look

handsome, and say coaxingly, "Alecto, my dear," and the Fury would have pawned her head-dress to pay his washing-bill.

After all, in the face of the grim woman he had thus so wantonly incensed, there was not so much menace as resolve. And that resolve was yet more shown in the movement of the hands than in the aspect of the countenance; those hands, — lean, firm, nervous hands, — slowly expanded; then as slowly clenched, as if her own thought had taken substance, and she was locking it in a clasp — tightly, tightly — never to be loosened till the pulse was still.

CHAPTER V.

The most submissive where they love may be the most stubborn where they do not love — Sophy is stubborn to Mr. Rugge — That injured man summons to his side Mrs. Crane, imitating the policy of those potentates who would retrieve the failures of force by the successes of diplomacy.

Mr. Rugge has obtained his object. But now comes the question, "What will he do with it?" Question with as many heads as the Hydra; and no sooner does an Author dispose of one head than up springs another.

Sophy has been bought and paid for — she is now, legally, Mr. Rugge's property. But there was a wise peer who once bought Punch — Punch became his property, and was brought in triumph to his lordship's house. To my lord's great dismay Punch would not talk. To Rugge's great dismay Sophy would not act.

Rendered up to Jasper Losely and Mrs. Crane, they had not lost an hour in removing her from Gatesboro' and its neighbourhood. They did not, however, go back to the village in which they had left Rugge, but returned straight to London, and wrote to the manager to join them there.

Sophy, once captured, seemed stupified, she evinced no noisy passion — she made no violent resistance. When she was told to love and obey a father in Jasper Losely, she lifted her eyes to his face — then turned them away, and shook her head, mute and incredulous. That man her father! she did not believe it. Indeed, Jasper took no pains to convince her of the relationship, or win her attachment. He was not unkindly rough — he seemed wholly indifferent — probably he was so. For the ruling vice of the man was in his egotism. It was not so much that he had bad principles and bad feelings, as that he had no principles and no feelings at all, except as they began, continued, and ended in that system of centralisation, which not more paralyses healthful action in a state, than it does in the individual man. Self-indulgence with him was absolute. He was not without power of keen calculation, not without much cunning. He could

conceive a project for some gain far off in the future, and concoct, for its realisation, schemes subtly woven, astutely guarded. But he could not secure their success by any long sustained sacrifices of the caprice of one hour or the indolence of the next. If it had been a great object to him for life to win Sophy's filial affection he would not have bored himself for five minutes each day to gain that object. Besides, he had just enough of shame to render him uneasy at the sight of the child he had deliberately sold. So, after chucking her under the chin, and telling her to be a good girl and be grateful for all that Mrs. Crane had done for her and meant still to do, he consigned her almost solely to that lady's care.

When Rugge arrived, and Sophy was informed of her intended destination, she broke silence — her colour went and came quickly — she declared, folding her arms upon her breast, that she would never act if separated from her grandfather. Mrs. Crane, struck by her manner, suggested to Rugge that it might be as well now that she was legally secured to the manager, to humour her wish, and re-engage Waife. Whatever the tale with which, in order to obtain Sophy from the Mayor, she had turned that worthy magistrate's mind

against the comedian, she had not gratified Mr. Rugge by a similar confidence to him. To him she said nothing which might operate against renewing engagements with Waife, if he were so disposed. But Rugge had no faith in a child's firmness, and he had a strong spite against Waife, so he obstinately refused. He insisted, however, as a peremptory condition of the bargain, that Mr. Losely and Mrs. Crane should accompany him to the town to which he had transferred his troop, both in order by their presence to confirm his authority over Sophy, and to sanction his claim to her, should Waife reappear and dispute it. For Rugge's profession being scarcely legitimate, and decidedly equivocal, his right to bring up a female child to the same calling might be called into question before a magistrate, and necessitate the production of her father in order to substantiate the special contract. In return, the manager handsomely offered to Mr. Losely and Mr. Crane to pay their expenses in the excursion — a liberality haughtily rejected by Mrs. Crane for herself, though she agreed at her own charge to accompany Losely if he decided on complying with the manager's request. Losely at first raised objections, but hearing that there would be races in the neigh-

bourhood, and having a peculiar passion for betting and all kinds of gambling, as well as an ardent desire to enjoy his £100 in so fashionable a manner, he consented to delay his return to the Continent, and attend Arabella Crane to the provincial Elis. Rugge carried off Sophy to her fellow "orphans."

AND SOPHY WOULD NOT ACT! In vain she was coaxed — in vain she was threatened — in vain she was deprived of food — in vain shut up in a dark hole — in vain was the lash held over her. Rugge, tyrant though he was, did not suffer the lash to fall. His self-restraint there might be humanity — might be fear of the consequences. For the state of her health began to alarm him — she might die — there might be an inquest. He wished now that he had taken Mrs. Crane's suggestion, and re-engaged Waife. But where *was* Waife? Meanwhile he had advertised the Young Phenomenon; placarded the walls with the name of Juliet Araminta; got up the piece of the Remorseless Baron, with a new rock scene. As Waife had had nothing to say in that drama, so any one could act his part.

The first performance was announced for that night — there would be such an audience — the best seats

even now pre-engaged — first night of the race week. The clock had struck seven — the performance began at eight. AND SOPHY WOULD NOT ACT!

The child was seated in a space that served for the green-room, behind the scenes. The whole company had been convened to persuade or shame her out of her obstinacy. The king's lieutenant, the seductive personage of the troop, was on one knee to her, like a lover. He was accustomed to lovers' parts, both on the stage and off it. Off it, he had one favoured phrase, hackneyed, but effective. "You are too pretty to be so cruel." Thrice he now repeated that phrase, with a simper that might have melted a heart of stone between each repetition. Behind Sophy's chair, and sticking calico-flowers into the child's tresses, stood the senior matron of the establishment — not a bad sort of woman — who kept the dresses, nursed the sick, revered Rugge, told fortunes on a pack of cards which she always kept in her pocket, and acted occasionally in parts where age was no drawback and ugliness desirable — such as a witch, or duenna, or whatever in the dialogue was poetically called "Hag." Indeed, Hag was the name she usually took from Rugge — that which she bore from her defunct husband was

Gormerick. This lady, as she braided the garland was also bent on the soothing system, saying, with great sweetness, considering that her mouth was full of pins, "Now, deary — now, dovey — look at ooself in the glass; we could beat oo, and pinch oo, and stick pins into oo, dovey, but we won't. Dovey will be good, I know;" and a great pat of rouge came on the child's pale cheeks. The clown therewith squatting before her with his hands on his knees, grinned lustily, and shrieked out — "My eyes, what a beauty!"

Rugge, meanwhile, one hand thrust in his bosom, contemplated the diplomatic efforts of his ministers, and saw by Sophy's compressed lips and unwinking eyes, that their cajoleries were unsuccessful. He approached, and hissed into her ear — "Don't madden me! don't! — you will act, eh?"

"No," said Sophy, suddenly rising; and tearing the wreath from her hair, she set her small foot on it with force. "No! not if you killed me!"

"Gods!" faltered Rugge. "And the sum I have paid. I am diddled! Who has gone for Mrs. Crane?"

"Tom," said the clown.

The word was scarcely out of the clown's mouth ere Mrs. Crane herself emerged from a side scene, and,

putting off her bonnet, laid both hands on the child's shoulders, and looked her in the face without speaking. The child as firmly returned the gaze. Give that child a martyr's cause, and in that frail body there would have been a martyr's soul. Arabella Crane, not inexperienced in children, recognised a power of will, stronger than the power of brute force, in that tranquillity of eye — the spark of calm light in its tender blue — blue, pure as the sky, light, steadfast as the star.

"Leave her to me, all of you," said Mrs. Crane. "I will take her to your private room, Mr. Rugge;" and she led the child away to a sort of recess, room it could not be rightly called, fenced round with boxes and crates, and containing the manager's desk and two stools.

"Sophy," then said Mrs. Crane, "you say you will not act unless your grandfather be with you. Now, hear me. You know that I have been always stern and hard with you. I never professed to love you — nor do I. But you have not found me untruthful. When I say a thing seriously, as I am speaking now, you may believe me. Act to-night, and I will promise you faithfully that I will either bring your grandfather

here, or I will order it so that you shall be restored to him. If you refuse, I make no threat, but I shall leave this place; and my belief is that you will be your grandfather's death."

"His death — his death — I!"

"By first dying yourself. Oh, you smile; you think it would be happiness to die. What matter that the old man you profess to care for is brokenhearted! Brat, leave selfishness to boys — you are a girl! — Suffer!"

"Selfish!" murmured Sophy, "selfish! that was said of me before. Selfish! — ah, I understand. No, I ought not to wish to die — what would become of him?" She fell on her knees, and, raising both her clasped hands, prayed inly, silently — an instant, not more. She rose. "If I do act, then — it is a promise — you will keep it. I shall see him — he shall know where I am — we shall meet!"

"A promise — sacred. I will keep it. Oh, girl, how much you will love some day — how your heart will ache! and when you are my age, look at that heart, then at your glass — perhaps you may be, within and without, like me."

Sophy — innocent Sophy — stared, awestricken,

but uncomprehending. Mrs. Crane led her back passive.

“There, she will act. Put on the wreath. Trick her out. Hark ye, Mr. Rugge. This is for one night. I have made conditions with her: either you must take back her grandfather, or — she must return to him.”

“And my £100?”

“In the latter case ought to be repaid you.”

“Am I never to have the Royal York theatre? Ambition of my life, Ma’am! Dreamed of it thrice! Ha! but she will act, and succeed. But to take back the old vagabond — a bitter pill! He shall halve it with me! Ma’am, I’m your grateful —”

CHAPTER VI.

Threadbare is the simile which compares the world to a stage. Schiller, less complimentary than Shakespeare, lowers the illustration from a stage to a puppet-show. But ever between realities and shows there is a secret communication, an undetected interchange — sometimes a stern reality in the heart of the ostensible actor, a fantastic stage-play in the brain of the unnoticed spectator. The Bandit's Child on the proscenium is still poor little Sophy, in spite of garlands and rouge. But that honest rough-looking fellow to whom, in respect for services to Sovereign and Country, the apprentice yields way — may he not be — the crafty Comedian?

Taran-tarantara — rub-a-dub-dub — play up horn — roll drum — a quarter to eight; and the crowd already thick before Rugge's Grand Exhibition — "Remorseless Baron and Bandit's Child! Young Phenomenon — Juliet Araminta — Patronised by the Nobility in general, and expecting daily to be summoned to perform before the Queen — *Vivat Regina!*" — Rub-a-dub-dub. The company issue from the curtain

— range in front of the proscenium. Splendid dresses. The Phenomenon! — 'tis she!

“My eyes, there's a beauty!” cries the clown.

The days have already grown somewhat shorter: but it is not yet dusk. How charmingly pretty she still is, despite that horrid paint; but how wasted those poor bare snowy arms!

A most doleful lugubrious dirge mingles with the drum and horn. A man has forced his way close by the stage — a man with a confounded cracked hurdy-gurdy. Whine — whine — creaks the hurdy-gurdy “Stop that — stop that mu-zeek,” cries a delicate apprentice, clapping his hands to his ears.

“Pity a poor blind —” answers the man with the hurdy-gurdy.

“Oh you are blind, are you? but we are not deaf. There's a penny not to play. What black thing have you got there by a string?”

“My dog, sir!”

“Devilish ugly one — not like a dog — more like a bear — with horns?”

“I say, master,” cries the clown, “Here's a blind man come to see the Phenomenon!”

The crowd laugh; they make way for the blind

man's black dog. They suspect, from the clown's address, that the blind man has something to do with the company.

You never saw two uglier specimens of their several species than the blind man and his black dog. He had rough red hair and a red beard, his face had a sort of twist that made every feature seem crooked. His eyes were not bandaged, but the lids were closed, and he lifted them up piteously as if seeking for light. He did not seem, however, like a common beggar; had rather the appearance of a reduced sailor. Yes, you would have bet ten to one he had been a sailor, not that his dress belonged to that noble calling, but his build, the roll of his walk, the tie of his cravat, a blue anchor tattooed on that great brown hand — certainly a sailor — a British tar! poor man.

The dog was hideous enough to have been exhibited as a *lusus naturæ*, — evidently very aged — for its face and ears were grey, the rest of it a rusty reddish black; it had immensely long ears, pricked up like horns; it was a dog that must have been brought from foreign parts; it might have come from Acheron, sire by Cerberus, so portentous, and (if not irreverent the epithet) so infernal was its aspect, with that grey

face, those antlered ears, and its ineffably weird demeanour altogether. A big dog, too, and evidently a strong one. All prudent folks would have made way for a man led by that dog. Whine creaked the hurdy-gurdy, and bow-wow all of a sudden barked the dog. Sophy stifled a cry, pressed her hand to her breast, and such a ray of joy flashed over her face, that it would have warmed your heart for a month to have seen it.

But do you mean to say, Mr. Author, that that British Tar (gallant, no doubt, but hideous) is Gentleman Waife, or that Stygian animal the snowy-curved Sir Isaac?

Upon my word, when I look at them myself, I, the Historian, am puzzled. If it had not been for that bow-wow, I am sure Sophy would not have suspected. "Tara-tarantara. Walk in ladies and gentlemen, walk in, the performance is about to commence!" Sophy lingers last.

"Yes, sir," said the blind man who had been talking to the apprentice. "Yes, sir," said he, loud and emphatically, as if his word had been questioned. "The child was snowed up, but luckily the window of the hut was left open, and exactly at two o'clock

in the morning, that dog came to the window, set up a howl, and —”

Sophy could hear no more — led away behind the curtain by the King's Lieutenant. But she had heard enough to stir her heart with an emotion that set all the dimples round her lip into undulating play.

CHAPTER VII.

A Sham carries off the Reality.

AND she did act, and how charmingly! with what glee and what gusto! Rugge was beside himself with pride and rapture. He could hardly perform his own Baronial part for admiration. The audience, a far choicer and more fastidious one than that in the Surrey village, was amazed, enthusiastic.

"I shall live to see my dream come true! I shall have the great York Theatre!" said Rugge, as he took off his wig and laid his head on his pillow. "Restore her for the £100! not for thousands!"

Alas, my sweet Sophy; alas! Has not the joy that made thee perform so well, undone thee! Ah, hadst thou but had the wit to act horribly, and be hissed!

"Uprose the sun and uprore Baron Rugge."

Not that ordinarily he was a very early man; but his excitement broke his slumbers. He lodged in

a small lodging-house close to his Exhibition; in the same house lodged his senior Matron, and Sophy herself. Mrs. Gormerick being ordered to watch the child, and never lose sight of her, slept in the same room with Sophy — room, for greater safety sake, in the highest storey of the house. The old woman served Rugge for housekeeper, made his tea, grilled his chop, and for company's sake shared his meals. Excitement as often sharpens the appetite as takes it away. Rugge had supped on hope, and he felt a craving for a more substantial breakfast. Accordingly, when he had dressed, he thrust his head into the passage, and seeing there the maid-of-all-work unbarring the street door, bade her go up stairs and wake Hag, that is, Mrs. Gormerick. Saying this, he extended a key; for he ever took the precaution, before retiring to rest, to lock the door of the room in which Sophy was consigned, on the outside, and guard the key till the next morning.

The maid nodded, and ascended the stairs. Less time than he expected passed away before Mrs. Gormerick made her appearance, her grey hair streaming under her night-cap, her form endued in a loose wrapper — her very face a tragedy.

"Powers above! What has happened?" exclaimed Rugge, prophetically.

"She is gone," sobbed Mrs. Gormerick; and, seeing the lifted arm and clenched fist of the manager, prudently fainted away.

CHAPTER VIII.

Corollaries from the problem suggested in Chapter VI. and VII.

BROAD daylight, nearly nine o'clock indeed, and Jasper Losely is walking back to his inn from the place at which he had dined the evening before. He has spent the night drinking, gambling, and though he looks heated, there is no sign of fatigue. Nature in wasting on this man many of her most glorious elements of happiness, had not forgotten a herculean constitution — always restless and never tired, always drinking and never drunk. Certainly it is some consolation to delicate invalids, that it seldom happens that the sickly are very wicked. Criminals are generally athletic — constitution and conscience equally tough; large backs to their heads — strong suspensorial muscles — digestions that save them from the over-fine nerves of the virtuous. The native animal must be vigorous in the human being, when the moral safe-

guards are daringly overleapt. Jasper was not alone, but with an acquaintance he had made at the dinner, and whom he invited to his inn to breakfast; they were walking familiarly arm-in-arm. Very unlike the brilliant Losely — a young man under thirty, who seemed to have washed out all the colours of youth in dirty water. His eyes dull, their whites yellow; his complexion sodden. His form was thickset and heavy; his features pug, with a cross of the bull-dog. In dress, a specimen of the flash style of sporting man, as exhibited on the Turf, or more often, perhaps, in the Ring; Belcher neckcloth, with an immense pin representing a jockey at full gallop; cut away coat, corduroy breeches, and boots with tops of a chalky white. Yet, withal, not the air and walk of a genuine born and bred sporting man, even of the vulgar order. Something about him which reveals the pretender. A would-be hawk with a pigeon's liver — a would-be sportsman with a Cockney's nurture.

Samuel Adolphus Poole is an orphan of respectable connections. His future expectations chiefly rest on an uncle from whom, as godfather, he takes the loathed name of Samuel. He prefers to sign himself Adolphus; he is popularly styled Dolly. For his

present existence he relies ostensibly on his salary as an assistant in the house of a London tradesman in a fashionable way of business. Mr. Latham, his employer, has made a considerable fortune, less by his shop than by discounting the bills of his customers, or of other borrowers whom the loan draws into the net of the custom. Mr. Latham connives at the sporting tastes of Dolly Poole. Dolly has often thus been enabled to pick up useful pieces of information as to the names and repute of such denizens of the sporting world as might apply to Mr. Latham for temporary accommodation. Dolly Poole has many sporting friends; he has also many debts. He has been a dupe, he is now a rogue; but he wants decision of character to put into practice many valuable ideas that his experience of dupe and his development into rogue suggest to his ambition. Still, however, now and then, wherever a shabby trick can be safely done, he is what he calls "lucky." He has conceived a prodigious admiration for Jasper Losely, one cause for which will be explained in the dialogue about to be recorded; another cause for which is analogous to that loving submission with which some ill-conditioned brute acknowledges a master in the hand that

has threshed it. For at Losely's first appearance at the convivial meeting just concluded, being nettled at the imperious airs of superiority which that roysterer assumed, mistaking for effeminacy Jasper's elaborate dandyism, and not recognising in the bravo's elegant proportions the tiger-like strength of which, in truth, that tiger-like suppleness should have warned him, Dolly Poole provoked a quarrel, and being himself a stout fellow, nor unaccustomed to athletic exercises, began to spar; the next moment he was at the other end of the room full-sprawl on the floor; and, two minutes afterwards, the quarrel made up by conciliating banqueters, with every bone in his skin seeming still to rattle, he was generously blubbering out that he never bore malice, and shaking hands with Jasper Losely as if he had found a benefactor. But now to the dialogue.

JASPER. — "Yes, Poole, my hearty, as you say, that fellow trumping my best club lost me the last rubber. There's no certainty in whist, if one has a spoon for a partner."

POOLE. — "No certainty in every rubber, but next to certainty in the long run, when a man plays as well as you do, Mr. Losely. Your winnings to-night

must have been pretty large, though you had a bad partner almost every hand; — pretty large — eh?”

JASPER. — (carelessly). — “Nothing to talk of — a few ponies!”

POOLE. — “More than a few; I should know.”

JASPER. — “Why? You did not play after the first rubber.”

POOLE. — “No, when I saw your play on that first rubber, I cut out, and bet on you; and very grateful to you I am. Still you would win more with a partner who understood your game.”

The shrewd Dolly paused a moment, and leaning significantly on Jasper’s arm, added, in a half whisper, “I do; it is a French one.”

Jasper did not change colour, but a quick rise of the eyebrow, and a slight jerk of the neck, betrayed some little surprise or uneasiness; however, he rejoined without hesitation — “French, ay! In France there is more dash, in playing out trumps than there is with English players.”

“And with a player like you,” said Poole, still in a half whisper, “more trumps to play out.”

Jasper turned round sharp and short; the hard, cruel expression of his mouth, little seen of late, came

back to it. Poole recoiled, and his bones began again to ache. "I did not mean to offend you, Mr. Losely, but to caution."

"Caution!"

"There were two knowing coves, who, if they had not been so drunk, would not have lost their money without a row, and they would have seen *how* they lost it; they are sharpers — you served them right — don't be angry with me. You want a partner — so do I; you play better than I do, but I play well; you shall have two-thirds of our winnings, and when you come to town I'll introduce you to a pleasant set of young fellows — green."

Jasper mused a moment. "You know a thing or two, I see, Master Poole, and we'll discuss the whole subject after breakfast. Arn't you hungry? — No! — I am! Hillo — who's that?"

His arm was seized by Mr. Rugge. "She's gone — fled," gasped the manager breathless. "Out of the lattice — fifteen feet high — not dashed to pieces — vanished!"

"Go on and order breakfast," said Losely to Mr. Poole, who was listening too inquisitively. He drew

the manager away. "Can't you keep your tongue in your head before strangers? the girl is gone!"

"Out of the lattice, and fifteen feet high!"

"Any sheets left hanging out of the lattice?"

"Sheets! No."

"Then she did not go without help — somebody must have thrown up to her a rope-ladder — nothing so easy — done it myself scores of times for the descent of 'maids who love the moon,' Mr. Rugge. But at her age there is not a moon — at least there is not a man in the moon; one must dismiss, then, the idea of a rope-ladder — too precocious. But are you quite sure she is gone? not hiding in some cupboard? *Sacre!* — very odd. Have you seen Mrs. Crane about it?"

"Yes, just come from her; she thinks that villain Waife must have stolen her. But I want you, sir, to come with me to a magistrate."

"Magistrate! I — why? — nonsense — set the police to work."

"Your deposition that she is your lawful child, lawfully made over to me is necessary for the Inquisition — I mean police."

"Hang it, what a bother! I hate magistrates, and all belonging to them. Well, I must breakfast; I'll

see to it afterwards. Oblige me by not calling Mr. Waife a villain — good old fellow in his way.”

“Good! Powers above!”

“But if he took her off, how did he get at her? It must have been preconcerted.”

“Ha! true. But she has not been suffered to speak to a soul not in the company — Mrs. Crane excepted.”

“Perhaps at the performance last night some signal was given.”

“But if Waife had been there I should have seen him; my troop would have known him; such a remarkable face — one eye, too.”

“Well, well, do what you think best. I’ll call on you after breakfast; let me go now. *Basta! basta!*”

Losely wrenched himself from the manager, and strode off to the inn; then, ere joining Poole, he sought Mrs. Crane.

“This going before a magistrate,” said Losely, “to depose that I have made over my child to that black-guard showman — in this town too — after such luck as I have had, and where bright prospects are opening on me, is most disagreeable. And supposing when we have traced Sophy, she should be really with the old

man — awkward! In short, my dear friend, my dear Bella” — (Losely could be very coaxing when it was worth his while) — “you just manage this for me. I have a fellow in the next room waiting to breakfast; as soon as breakfast is over I shall be off to the race-ground, and so shirk that ranting old bore; you’ll call on him instead, and settle it somehow.” He was out of the room before she could answer.

Mrs. Crane found it no easy matter to soothe the infuriate manager when he heard Losely was gone to amuse himself at the race-course. Nor did she give herself much trouble to pacify Mr. Rugge’s anger, or assist his investigations. Her interest in the whole affair seemed over. Left thus to his own devices, Rugge however, began to institute a sharp, and what promised to be an effective investigation. He ascertained that the fugitive certainly had not left by the railway, or by any of the public conveyances; he sent scouts over all the neighbourhood; he enlisted the sympathy of the police, who confidently assured him that they had “a net-work over the three kingdoms;” no doubt they have, and we pay for it; but the meshes are so large that anything less than a whale must be silly indeed if it consent to be caught. Rugge’s suspi-

cions were directed to Waife — he could collect, however, no evidence to confirm them. No person answering to Waife's description had been seen in the town. Once, indeed, Rugge was close on the right scent; for, insisting upon Waife's one eye and his possession of a white dog, he was told by several witnesses that a man blind of two eyes, and led by a black dog, had been close before the stage, just previous to the performance. But then the clown had spoken to that very man; all the Thespian company had observed him; all of them had known Waife familiarly for years; and all deposed that any creature more unlike to Waife than the blind man could not be turned out of Nature's workshop. But where was that blind man? They found out the wayside inn in which he had taken a lodging for the night; and there it was ascertained that he had paid for his room before hand, stating that he should start for the race-course early in the morning. Rugge himself set out to the race-course to kill two birds with one stone — catch Mr. Losely — examine the blind man himself.

He did catch Mr. Losely, and very nearly caught something else — for that gentleman was in a ring of noisy horsemen, mounted on a hired hack, and loud as

the noisiest. When Rugge came up to his stirrup, and began his harangue, Losely turned his hack round with so sudden an appliance of bit and spur, that the animal lashed out, and its heel went within an inch of the manager's cheek-bone. Before Rugge could recover, Losely was in a hand gallop. But the blind man! Of course Rugge did not find him? You are mistaken; he did. The blind man was there, dog and all. The manager spoke to him, and did not know him from Adam.

Nor have you or I, my venerated readers, any right whatsoever to doubt whether Mr. Rugge could be so stolidly obtuse. Granting that blind sailor to be the veritable William Waife — William Waife was a man of genius, taking pains to appear an ordinary mortal. And the anecdotes of Munden, or of Bamfylde Moore Carew, suffice to tell us how Protean is the power of transformation in a man whose genius is mimetic. But how often does it happen to us, venerated readers, not to recognise a man of genius, even when he takes no particular pains to escape detection! A man of genius may be for ten years our next door neighbour — he may dine in company with us twice a-week — his face may be as familiar to our eyes

as our arm-chair — his voice to our ears as the click of our parlour-clock — yet we are never more astonished than when all of a sudden, some bright day, it is discovered that our next-door neighbour is — a man of genius. Did you ever hear tell of the life of a man of genius, but what there were numerous witnesses who deposed to the fact, that until, perfidious dissembler, he flared up and set the Thames on fire, they had never seen anything in him — an odd creature, perhaps a good creature — probably a poor creature; — But a MAN of GENIUS! They would as soon have suspected him of being the Cham of Tartary! Nay, candid readers, are there not some of you who refuse to the last to recognise the man of genius, till he has paid his penny to Charon, and his passport to immortality has been duly examined by the customhouse officers of Styx! When one half the world drag forth that same next-door neighbour, place him on a pedestal, and have him cried, “O yez! O yez! Found a man of genius! Public property — open to inspection!” does not the other half the world put on its spectacles, turn up its nose, and cry, “*That* a man of genius, indeed! Pelt him! — pelt him!” Then of course there is a clatter, what the vulgar call

"a shindy," round the pedestal. Squeezed by his believers, shied at by his scoffers, the poor man gets horribly mauled about, and drops from the perch in the midst of the row. Then they shovel him over, clap a great stone on his relics, wipe their fore heads, shake hands, compromise the dispute, the one half the world admitting, that though he was a genius he was still an ordinary man; the other half allowing, that though he was an ordinary man, he was still a genius. And so on to the next pedestal with its "Hic stet," and the next great stone with its "Hic jacet."

The manager of the Grand Theatrical Exhibition gazed on the blind sailor, and did not know him from Adam!

CHAPTER IX.

The aboriginal Man-eater, or Pocket-Cannibal, is susceptible of the refining influence of Civilisation. He decorates his lair with the skins of his victims; he adorns his person with the spoils of those whom he devours. Mr. Losely introduced to Mr. Poole's friends — dresses for dinner; and, combining elegance with appetite, eats them up.

ELATED with the success which had rewarded his talents for pecuniary speculation, and dismissing from his mind all thoughts of the fugitive Sophy and the spoliated Rugge, Jasper Losely returned to London in company with his new friend, Mr. Poole. He left Arabella Crane to perform the same journey, unattended; but that grim lady, carefully concealing any resentment at such want of gallantry, felt assured that she should not be long in London without being honoured by his visits.

In renewing their old acquaintance, Mrs. Crane had contrived to establish over Jasper that kind of

influence which a vain man, full of schemes that are not to be told to all the world, but which it is convenient to discuss with some confidential friend who admires himself too highly not to respect his secrets, mechanically yields to a woman whose wits are superior to his own.

It is true that Jasper, on his return to the metropolis, was not magnetically attracted towards Podden Place; nay, days and even weeks elapsed, and Mrs. Crane was not gladdened by his presence. But she knew that her influence was only suspended — not extinct. The body attracted was for the moment kept from the body attracting, by the abnormal weights that had dropped into its pockets. Restore the body thus temporarily counterpoised to its former lightness, and it would turn to Podden Place as the needle to the Pole. Meanwhile, oblivious of all such natural laws, the disloyal Jasper had fixed himself as far from the reach of the magnet as from Bloomsbury's remotest verge is St. James's animated centre. The apartment he engaged was showy and commodious. He added largely to his wardrobe — his dressing-case — his trinket-box. Nor, be it here observed, was Mr. Losely one of those beauish brigands who wear tawdry scarfs

over soiled linen, and paste rings upon unwashed digitals. To do him justice, the man so stony-hearted to others, loved and cherished his own person with exquisite tenderness, lavished upon it delicate attentions, and gave to it the very best he could afford. He was no coarse *débauché*, smelling of bad cigars and ardent spirits. Cigars, indeed, were not among his vices (at worst the rare peccadillo of a *cigarette*) — spirit-drinking was; but the monster's digestion was still so strong, that he could have drunk out a gin palace, and you would only have sniffed the *jasmin* or *heliotrope* on the dainty cambric that wiped the last drop from his lips. Had his soul been a tenth part as clean as the form that belied it, Jasper Losely had been a saint! His apartments secured, his appearance thus revised and embellished, Jasper's next care was an equipage in keeping; he hired a smart cabriolet with a high-stepping horse, and, to go behind it, a groom whose size had been stunted in infancy by provident parents designing him to earn his bread in the stables as a light-weight, and therefore mingling his mother's milk with heavy liquors. In short, Jasper Losely set up to be a buck about town; in that capacity Dolly Poole introduced him to several

young gentlemen who combined commercial vocations with sporting tastes; they could not but participate in Poole's admiring, and somewhat envious respect for Jasper Losely. There was indeed about the vigorous miscreant a great deal of false brilliancy. Deteriorated from earlier youth though the beauty of his countenance might be, it was still undeniably handsome; and as force of muscle is beauty in itself in the eyes of young sporting men, so Jasper dazzled many a *gracilis puer*, who had the ambition to become an athlete, with the rare personal strength which, as if in the exuberance of animal spirits, he would sometimes condescend to display, by feats that astonished the curious and frightened the timid — such as bending a poker or horse-shoe, between hands elegantly white nor unadorned with rings — or lifting the weight of Samuel Dolly by the waistband, and holding him at arm's-length, with a playful bet of ten to one that he could stand by the fireplace and pitch the said Samuel Dolly out of the open window. To know so strong a man, so fine an animal, was something to boast of! Then, too, if Jasper had a false brilliancy, he had also a false *bonhommie*; it was true that he was somewhat imperious, swaggering, bullying — but

he was also off-hand and jocund; and as you knew him, that sidelong look, that defying gait (look and gait of the man whom the world cuts), wore away. In fact, he had got into a world which did not cut him, and his exterior was improved by the atmosphere.

Mr. Losely professed to dislike general society. Drawing-rooms were insipid; clubs full of old fogies. "I am for life, my boys," said Mr. Losely,

" 'Can sorrow from the goblet flow,
Or pain from Beauty's eye?' "

Mr. Losely, therefore, his hat on one side, lounged into the saloons of theatres, accompanied by a cohort of juvenile admirers, their hats on one side also, and returned to the pleasantest little suppers in his own apartment. There "the goblet" flowed — and after the goblet, cigars for some, and a rubber for all.

So puissant Losely's vitality, and so blest by the stars his luck, that his form seemed to wax stronger and his purse fuller by this "life." No wonder he was all for a life of that kind; but the slight beings who tried to keep up with him, grew thinner and thinner, and poorer and poorer; a few weeks made their cheeks spectral and their pockets a dismal void.

Then as some dropped off from sheer inanition, others whom they had decoyed by their praises of "Life" and its hero, came into the magic circle to fade and vanish in their turn.

In a space of time incredibly brief, not a whist-player was left upon the field; the victorious Losely had trumped out the last! Some few whom Nature had endowed more liberally than Fortune, still retained strength enough to sup — if asked;

"But none who came to sup remained to play."

"Plague on it," said Losely to Poole, as one afternoon they were dividing the final spoils. "Your friends are mightily soon cleaned out; could not even get up double dummy, last night; and we must hit on some new plan for replenishing the coffers! You have rich relations; can't I help you to make them more useful?"

Said Dolly Poole, who was looking exceedingly bilious, and had become a martyr to chronic headache, "My relations are prigs! Some of them give me the cold shoulder, others — a great deal of jaw. But as for tin, I might as well scrape a flint for it. My uncle Sam is more anxious about my sins than the other

codgers, because he is my godfather, and responsible for my sins, I suppose; and he says he will put me in the way of being respectable. My head's splitting —"

"Wood does split till it is seasoned," answered Losely. "Good fellow, uncle Sam! He'll put you in the way of tin; nothing else makes a man respectable."

"Yes — so he says; a girl with money —"

"A wife — tin canister! Introduce me to her, and she shall be tied to you."

Samuel Dolly did not appear to relish the idea of such an introduction. "I have not been introduced to her myself," said he. "But if you advise me to be spliced, why don't you get spliced yourself, a handsome fellow like you can be at no loss for an heiress?"

"Heiresses are the most horrid cheats in the world," said Losely: "there is always some father, or uncle, or fusty Lord Chancellor whose consent is essential, and not to be had. Heiresses in scores have been over head and ears in love with me. Before I left Paris, I sold their locks of hair to a wig-maker — three great trunksfull. Honour bright. But there were only two,

whom I could have, safely allowed to run away with me; and they were so closely watched, poor things, that I was forced to leave them to their fate — early graves! Don't talk to me of heiresses, Dolly, I have been the victim of heiresses. But a rich widow is an estimable creature. Against widows, if rich, I have not a word to say; and to tell you the truth, there is a widow whom I suspect I have fascinated, and whose connection I have a particular private reason for deeming desirable! She has a whelp of a son, who is a spoke in my wheel — were I his father-in-law, would not I be a spoke in his? I'd teach the boy '*life*,' Dolly." Here all trace of beauty vanished from Jasper's face, and Poole, staring at him, pushed away his chair. "But," — continued Losely, regaining his more usual expression of levity and boldness — "But I am not yet quite sure what the widow has, besides her son, in her own possession; we shall see. Meanwhile, is there — *no* chance of a rubber to-night?"

"None; unless you will let Brown and Smith play upon tick."

"Pooh! but there's Robinson, he has an aunt he can borrow from?"

"Robinson! spitting blood, with an attack of *delirium tremens*! — you have done for him."

"Can sorrow from the goblet flow?" said Losely. "Well, I suppose it can — when a man has no coats to his stomach; but you and I, Dolly Poole, have stomachs thick as pea-jackets, and proof as gutta percha."

Poole forced a ghastly smile, while Losely, gaily springing up, swept his share of booty into his pockets, slapped his comrade on the back, and said — "Then, if the mountain will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain! Hang whist, and up with *rouge et noir*! I have an infallible method of winning — only, it requires capital. You will club your cash with mine, and I'll play for both. Sup here to-night, and we'll go to the — hell afterwards."

Samuel Dolly had the most perfect confidence in his friend's science in the art of gambling, and he did not, therefore, dissent from the proposal made. Jasper gave a fresh touch to his toilette, and stepped into his cabriolet. Poole cast on him a look of envy, and crawled to his lodging — too ill for his desk, and with a strong desire to take to his bed.

CHAPTER X.

"Is there a heart that never loved
Nor felt soft woman's sigh?"

If there be such a heart, it is not in the breast of a Pocket-Cannibal. Your true Man-eater is usually of an amorous temperament: he can be indeed sufficiently fond of a lady to eat her up. Mr. Losely makes the acquaintance of a widow. For farther particulars inquire within.

THE dignified serenity of Gloucester Place, Portman Square, is agitated by the intrusion of a new inhabitant. A house in that favoured locality, which had for several months maintained "the solemn stillness and the dread repose" which appertain to dwellings that are to be let upon lease, unfurnished, suddenly started into that exuberant and aggressive life which irritates the nerves of its peaceful neighbours. The bills have been removed from the windows — the walls have been cleaned down and pointed — the street-door repainted a lively green — workmen have gone in and out. The observant ladies (single ones)

in the house opposite, discover, by the help of a telescope, that the drawing-rooms have been new papered, canary-coloured ground — festoon borders, and that the mouldings of the shutters have been gilt. Gilt shutters! that looks ominous of an ostentatious and party-giving tenant.

Then carts full of furniture have stopped at the door — carpets, tables, chairs, beds, wardrobes — all seemingly new, and in no inelegant taste, have been disgorged into the hall. It has been noticed, too, that every day a lady of slight figure and genteel habiliments has come, seemingly to inspect progress — evidently the new tenant. Sometimes she comes alone; sometimes with a dark-eyed handsome lad, probably her son. Who can she be? what is she? what is her name? her history? has she a right to settle in Gloucester Place, Portman Square? The detective police of London is not peculiarly vigilant; but its defects are supplied by the voluntary efforts of unmarried ladies. The new comer was a widow; her husband had been in the army; of good family; but a *mauvais sujet*; she had been left in straitened circumstances with an only son. It was supposed that she had unexpectedly come into a fortune — on the

strength of which she had removed from Pimlico into Gloucester Place. At length — the preparations completed — one Monday afternoon the widow, accompanied by her son, came to settle. The next day a footman in genteel livery (brown and orange) appeared at the door. Then, for the rest of the week, the baker and butcher called regularly. On the following Sunday, the lady and her son appeared at church.

No reader will be at a loss to discover in the new tenant of No. — Gloucester Place, the widowed mother of Lionel Haughton. The letter for that lady which Darrell had intrusted to his young cousin, had, in complimentary and cordial language, claimed the right to provide for her comfortable and honourable subsistence; and announced that, henceforth, L. 800 a-year would be placed quarterly to her account at Mr. Darrell's banker, and that an additional sum of L. 1200 was already there deposited in her name, in order to enable her to furnish any residence to which she might be inclined to remove. Mrs. Haughton, therewith, had removed to Gloucester Place.

She is seated by the window in her front drawing-room — surveying with proud though grateful heart, the elegancies by which she is surrounded. A very

winning countenance — lively eyes, that in themselves may be over-quick and petulant; but their expression is chastened by a gentle kindly mouth. And over the whole face, the attitude, the air, even the dress itself, is diffused the unmistakable simplicity of a sincere, natural character. No doubt Mrs. Haughton has her tempers, and her vanities, and her little harmless feminine weaknesses, but you could not help feeling in her presence that you were with an affectionate, warm-hearted, honest, good woman. She might not have the refinements of tone and manner which stamp the highbred gentlewoman of convention; she might evince the deficiencies of an imperfect third-rate education; but from a certain undefinable grace of person and music of voice, she was saved from vulgarity — even when she said or did things that well-bred people do not say or do; and there was an engaging intelligence in those quick hazel eyes that made you sure that she was sensible, even when she uttered what was silly.

Mrs. Haughton turned from the interior of the room to the open window. She is on the look out for her son, who has gone to call on Colonel Morley, and who ought to be returned by this time. She begins to get

a little fidgety — somewhat cross. While thus standing and thus watchful, there comes thundering down the street a high-stepping horse — bay, with white legs — it whirls on a cabriolet — blue, with vermilion wheels — two hands, in yellow kid gloves, are just seen under the hood. Mrs. Haughton suddenly blushes and draws in her head. Too late! the cabriolet has stopped — a gentleman leans forward, takes off his hat, bows respectfully. “Dear, dear!” murmurs Mrs. Haughton, “I do think he is going to call; some people are born to be tempted — my temptations have been immense! He is getting out — he knocks — I can’t say, now, that I am not at home — very awkward! I wish Lionel were here! What does he mean — neglecting his own mother, and leaving her a prey to tempters?”

While the footman is responding to the smart knock of the visitor, we will explain how Mrs. Haughton had incurred that gentleman’s acquaintance. In one of her walks to her new house while it was in the hands of the decorators, her mind being much absorbed in the consideration whether her drawing-room curtains should be chintz or tabouret — just as she was crossing the street, she was all but run over by a

gentleman's cabriolet. The horse was hard-mouthed, going at full speed. The driver pulled up just in time; but the wheel grazed her dress, and though she ran back instinctively, yet, when she was safe on the pavement, the fright overpowered her nerves, and she clung to the street-post almost fainting. Two or three passers-by humanely gathered round her; and the driver, looking back, and muttering to himself — "Not bad looking — neatly dressed — lady-like — French shawl — may have tin — worth while perhaps!" — gallantly descended and hastened to offer apologies, with a respectful hope that she was not injured.

Mrs. Haughton answered somewhat tartly, but being one of those goodhearted women who, apt to be rude, are extremely sorry for it the moment afterwards, she wished to repair any hurt to his feelings occasioned by her first impulse; and, when, renewing his excuses, he offered his arm over the crossing, she did not like to refuse. On gaining the side of the way on which her house was situated, she had recovered sufficiently to blush for having accepted such familiar assistance from a perfect stranger, and somewhat to falter in returning thanks for his politeness.

Our gentleman, whose estimate of his attractions

was not humble, ascribed the blushing cheek and faltering voice to the natural effect produced by his appearance; and he himself admiring very much a handsome bracelet on her wrist, which he deemed a favourable prognostic of "tin," he watched her to her door, and sent his groom in the course of the evening to make discreet inquiries in the neighbourhood. The result of the inquiries induced him to resolve upon prosecuting the acquaintance thus begun. He contrived to learn the hours at which Mrs. Haughton usually visited the house, and to pass by Gloucester Place at the very nick of time. His bow was recognising, respectful, interrogative — a bow that asked "how much farther?" But Mrs. Haughton's bow respondent seemed to declare "not at all!" The stranger did not adventure more that day; but a day or two afterwards he came again into Gloucester Place, on foot. On that occasion, Mrs. Haughton was with her son, and the gentleman would not seem to perceive her. The next day she was alone, and just as she gained her door, he advanced — "I beg you ten thousand pardons, Madam; but if I am rightly informed, I have the honour to address Mrs. Charles Haughton!"

The lady bowed in surprise.

“Ah, madam, your lamented husband was one of my most particular friends.”

“You don’t say so!” cried Mrs. Haughton, and looking more attentively at the stranger. There was in his dress and appearance something that she thought very stylish — a particular friend of Charles Haughton’s was sure to be stylish — to be a man of the first water. And she loved the poor Captain’s memory — her heart warmed to any “particular friend of his.”

“Yes,” resumed the gentleman, noting the advantage he had gained, “though I was considerably his junior, we were great cronies — excuse that familiar expression — in the Hussars together —”

“The Captain was not in the Hussars, sir; he was in the Guards.”

“Of course he was; but I was saying in the Hussars, together with the Guards, there were some very fine fellows — very fine — he was one of them. I could not resist paying my respects to the widowed lady of so fine a fellow. I know it is a liberty, ma’am, but ’tis my way. People who know me well — and I have a large acquaintance — are kind

enough to excuse my way. And to think that villainous horse, which I had just bought out of Lord Bolton's stud — (200 guineas, ma'am, and cheap) — should have nearly taken the life of Charles Haughton's lovely relict. If any body else had been driving that brute, I shudder to think what might have been the consequences; but I have a wrist of iron. Strength is a vulgar qualification — very vulgar — but when it saves a lady from perishing, how can one be ashamed of it? But I am detaining you. Your own house, Mrs. Haughton?"

"Yes, sir, I have just taken it, but the workmen have not finished. I am not yet settled here."

"Charming situation! My friend left a son I believe? In the army already?"

"No, sir, but he wishes it very much."

"Mr. Darrell, I think, could gratify that wish."

"What! you know Mr. Darrell, that most excellent, generous man? All we have we owe to him."

The gentleman abruptly turned aside — wisely — for his expression of face at that praise might have startled Mrs. Haughton.

"Yes, I knew him once. He has had many a fee out of my family. Goodish lawyer — cleverish man — and rich as a Jew. I should like to see my old friend's son, ma'am. He must be monstrous handsome with such parents!"

"Oh, sir, very like his father. I shall be proud to present him to you."

"Ma'am, I thank you. I will have the honour to call —"

And thus is explained how Jasper Losely has knocked at Mrs. Haughton's door — has walked up her stairs — has seated himself in her drawing-room, and is now edging his chair somewhat nearer to her, and throwing into his voice and looks a degree of admiration, which has been sincerely kindled by the aspect of her elegant apartments.

Jessica Haughton was not one of those women, if such there be, who do not know when a gentleman is making up to them. She knew perfectly well, that with a very little encouragement, her visitor would declare himself a suitor. Nor, to speak truth, was she quite insensible to his handsome person, nor quite unmoved by his flatteries. She had her weak points, and vanity was one of them. Nor conceived she, poor

lady, the slightest suspicion that Jasper Losely was not a personage whose attentions might flatter any woman. Though he had not even announced a name, but, pushing aside the footman, had sauntered in with as familiar an ease as if he had been a first cousin; though he had not uttered a syllable that could define his station, or attest his boasted friendship with the dear defunct, still Mrs. Haughton implicitly believed that she was with one of those gay Chiefs of *Ton* who had glittered round her Charlie in that earlier morning of his life, ere he had sold out of the Guards, and bought himself out of jail; a lord, or an honourable at least, and was even (I shudder to say), revolving in her mind whether it might not be an excellent thing for her dear Lionel if she could prevail on herself to procure for him the prop and guidance of a distinguished and brilliant father-in-law — rich, noble, evidently goodnatured, sensible, attractive. Oh! but the temptation was growing more and more IMMENSE! when suddenly the door opened, and in sprang Lionel, crying out, “Mother, dear, the Colonel has come with me on purpose to —”

He stopped short, staring hard at Jasper Losely. That gentleman advanced a few steps, extending his

hand, but came to an abrupt halt on seeing Colonel Morley's figure now filling up the doorway. Not that he feared recognition — the Colonel did not know him by sight, but he knew by sight the Colonel. In his own younger day, when lolling over the rails of Rotten Row, he had enviously noted the leaders of fashion pass by, and Colonel Morley had not escaped his observation. Colonel Morley indeed, was one of those men who by name and repute are sure to be known to all who, like Jasper Losely in his youth, would fain know something about that gaudy, babbling, and remorseless world which, like the sun, either vivifies or corrupts, according to the properties of the object on which it shines. Strange to say, it was the mere sight of the real fine gentleman that made the mock fine gentleman shrink and collapse. Though Jasper Losely knew himself to be still called a magnificent man — one of royal Nature's Lifeguardsmen — though confident that from top to toe his habiliments could defy the criticism of the strictest martinet in polite costume, no sooner did that figure — by no means handsome, and clad in garments innocent of buckram, but guilty of wrinkles — appear on the threshold, than Jasper Losely felt small and shabby, as if he had

been suddenly reduced to five feet two, and had bought his coat out of an old clothesman's bag.

Without appearing even to see Mr. Losely, the Colonel, in his turn, as he glided past him towards Mrs. Haughton, had, with what is proverbially called the corner of the eye, taken the whole of that impostor's superb *personnel* into calm survey, had read him through and through, and decided on these two points without the slightest hesitation — "a lady-killer and a sharper."

Quick as breathing had been the effect thus severally produced on Mrs. Haughton's visitors, which it has cost so many words to describe, so quick that the Colonel, without any apparent pause of dialogue, has already taken up the sentence Lionel left uncompleted, and says, as he bows over Mrs. Haughton's hand, "come on purpose to claim acquaintance with an old friend's widow, a young friend's mother."

Mrs. HAUGHTON. — "I am sure, Colonel Morley, I am very much flattered. And you, too, knew the poor dear Captain; 'tis so pleasant to think that his old friends come round us now. This gentleman, also, was a particular friend of dear Charles's."

The Colonel had somewhat small eyes, which moved with habitual slowness. He lifted those eyes, let them drop upon Jasper (who still stood in the middle of the room, with one hand still half-extended towards Lionel), and letting the eyes rest there while he spoke, repeated,

“Particular friend of Charles Haughton’s — the only one of his particular friends whom I never had the honour to see before.”

Jasper who, whatever his deficiency in other virtues, certainly did not lack courage, made a strong effort at self-possession, and without replying to the Colonel, whose remark had not been directly addressed to himself, said, in his most rollicking tone — “Yes, Mrs. Haughton, Charles was my particular friend, but,” — lifting his eye-glass — “but this gentleman was,” dropping the eye-glass negligently, “not in our set, I suppose.” Then advancing to Lionel, and seizing his hand, “I must introduce myself — the image of your father, I declare! I was saying to Mrs. Haughton how much I should like to see you — proposing to her, just as you came in, that we should go to the play together. Oh, ma’am, you may trust him to me safely.

Young men should 'see LIFE." Here Jasper tipped Lionel one of those knowing winks with which he was accustomed to delight and ensnare the young friends of Mr. Poole, and hurried on: "But in an innocent way, ma'am, such as mothers would approve. We'll fix an evening for it, when I have the honour to call again. Good morning, Mrs. Haughton. Your hand again, sir (to Lionel). — Ah, we shall be great friends, I guess! You must let me take you out in my cab — teach you to handle the ribbons, eh? 'Gad, my old friend Charles *was* a whip. Ha! ha! Good day, good day!"

Not a muscle had moved in the Colonel's face during Mr. Losely's jovial monologue. But when Jasper had bowed himself out, Mrs. Haughton, curtsying, and ringing the bell for the footman to open the street door, the man of the world (and, as man of the world, Colonel Morley was consummate), again raised those small, slow eyes — this time towards *her* face — and dropped the words —

"My old friend's particular friend is not bad-looking, Mrs. Haughton!"

"And so lively and pleasant," returned Mrs. Haugh-

ton, with a slight rise of colour, but no other sign of embarrassment. "It may be a nice acquaintance for Lionel."

"Mother!" cried that ungrateful boy, "you are not speaking seriously. I think the man is odious. If he were not my father's friend, I should say he was —"

"What, Lionel?" asked the Colonel, blandly — "was what?"

"Snobbish, sir."

"Lionel, how dare you!" exclaimed Mrs. Haughton. "What vulgar words boys do pick up at school, Colonel Morley."

"We must be careful that they do not pick up worse than words when they leave school, my dear madam. You will forgive me, but Mr. Darrell has so expressly — of course, with your permission — commended this young gentleman to my responsible care and guidance — so openly confided to me his views and intentions, that perhaps you would do me the very great favour not to force upon him, against his own wishes, the acquaintance of — that very good-looking person."

Mrs. Haughton pouted, but kept down her rising temper. The Colonel began to awe her.

"By the by," continued the man of the world, "may I inquire the name of my old friend's particular friend?"

"His name — upon my word I really don't know it. Perhaps he left his card — ring the bell, Lionel."

"You don't know his name, yet you know *him*, ma'am, and would allow your son to see LIFE under his auspices! I beg you ten thousand pardons; but even ladies the most cautious, mothers the most watchful, are exposed to —"

"Immense temptations — that is — to — to —"

"I understand perfectly, my dear Mrs. Haughton."

The footman appeared. "Did that gentleman leave a card?"

"No, ma'am."

"Did not you ask his name when he entered?"

"Yes, ma'am, but he said he would announce himself."

When the footman had withdrawn, Mrs. Haughton exclaimed piteously, "I have been to blame, Colonel

— I see it. But Lionel will tell you how I came to know the gentleman — the gentleman who nearly ran over me, Lionel, and then spoke so kindly about your dear father.”

“Oh, that is the person! — I supposed so,” cried Lionel, kissing his mother, who was inclined to burst into tears. “I can explain it all now, Colonel Morley. Any one who says a kind word about my father, warms my mother’s heart to him at once — is it not so, mother dear?”

“And long be it so,” said Colonel Morley, with graceful earnestness; “and may such be my passport to your confidence, Mrs. Haughton. Charles was my old schoolfellow — a little boy when I and Darrell were in the sixth form; and, pardon me if I add, that if that gentleman were ever Charles Haughton’s particular friend, he could scarcely have been a very wise one. For, unless his appearance greatly belie his years, he must have been little more than a boy when Charles Haughton left Lionel fatherless.”

Here, in the delicacy of tact, seeing that Mrs. Haughton looked ashamed of the subject, and seemed

aware of her imprudence, the Colonel rose, with a request — cheerfully granted — that Lionel might be allowed to come to breakfast with him the next morning.

CHAPTER XI.

A man of the world, having accepted a troublesome charge, considers "what he will do with it;" and, having promptly decided, is sure, first, that he could not have done better; and, secondly, that much may be said to prove that he could not have done worse.

Reserving to a later occasion any more detailed description of Colonel Morley, it suffices for the present to say that he was a man of a very fine understanding, as applied to the special world in which he lived. Though no one had a more numerous circle of friends, and though with many of those friends he was on that footing of familiar intimacy which Darrell's active career once, and his rigid seclusion of late, could not have established with any idle denizen of that brilliant society in which Colonel Morley moved and had his being, yet, to Alban Morley's heart (a heart not easily reached), no friend was so dear as Guy Darrell. They had entered Eton on the same day — left it the same

day — lodged while there in the same house; and though of very different characters, formed one of those strong, imperishable, brotherly affections which the Fates weave into the very woof of existence.

Darrell's recommendation would have secured to any young *protégé* Colonel Morley's gracious welcome and invaluable advice. But, both as Darrell's acknowledged kinsman, and as Charles Haughton's son, Lionel called forth his kindest sentiments, and obtained his most sagacious deliberations. He had already seen the boy several times, before waiting on Mrs. Haughton, deeming it would please her to defer his visit until she could receive him in all the glories of Gloucester Place; and he had taken Lionel into high favour, and deemed him worthy of a conspicuous place in the world. Though Darrell in his letter to Colonel Morley had emphatically distinguished the position of Lionel, as a favoured kinsman, from that of a presumptive or even a probable heir, yet the rich man had also added: "But I wish him to take rank as the representative to the Haughtons; and, whatever I may do with the bulk of my fortune, I shall insure to him a liberal independence. The completion of his education, the adequate allowance to him, the choice of

a profession, are matters in which I entreat you to act for yourself, as if you were his guardian. I am leaving England — I may be abroad for years." Colonel Morley, in accepting the responsibilities thus pressed on him, brought to bear upon his charge, subtle discrimination, as well as conscientious anxiety.

He saw that Lionel's heart was set upon the military profession, and that his power of application seemed lukewarm and desultory when not cheered and centred by enthusiasm, and would, therefore, fail him if directed to studies which had no immediate reference to the objects of his ambition. The Colonel, accordingly, dismissed the idea of sending him for three years to an University. Alban Morley summed up his theories on the collegiate ordeal in these succinct aphorisms: "Nothing so good as an University education, nor worse than an University without its education. Better throw a youth at once into the wider sphere of a capital provided you there secure to his social life the ordinary checks of good company, the restraints imposed by the presence of decorous women, and men of grave years and dignified repute; — than confine him to the exclusive society of youths of his own age — the age of wild spirits and unre-

flecting imitation — unless he cling to the safeguard, which is found in hard reading, less by the book-knowledge it bestows, than by the serious and pre-occupied mind which it abstracts from the coarser temptations.”

But Lionel, younger in character than in years, was too boyish as yet to be safely consigned to those trials of tact and temper which await the neophyte who enters on life through the doors of a mess-room. His pride was too morbid, too much on the alert for offence; his frankness too crude, his spirit too untamed by the insensible discipline of social commerce.

Quoth the observant Man of the World: “Place his honour in his own keeping, and he will carry it about with him on full cock, to blow off a friend’s head or his own before the end of the month. Huffy — decidedly huffy! And of all causes that disturb regiments, and induce court-martials — the commonest cause is a huffy lad! Pity! for that youngster has in him the right metal — spirit and talent that should make him a first-rate soldier. It would be time well spent that should join professional studies with that degree of polite culture that gives dignity and cures *huffiness*. I must get him out of London, out of Eng-

land — cut him off from his mother's apron-strings, and the particular friends of his poor father who prowl unannounced into the widow's drawing-room. He shall go to Paris — no better place to learn military theories, and be civilised out of huffy dispositions. No doubt my old friend, the chevalier, who has the art strategic at his finger ends, might be induced to take him *en pension*, direct his studies, and keep him out of harm's way. I can secure to him the *entrée* into the circles of the rigid old Faubourg St. Germain, where manners are best bred, and household ties most respected. Besides, as I am so often at Paris myself, I shall have him under my eye, and a few years there spent in completing him as man, may bring him nearer to that marshal's baton which every recruit should have in his eye, than if I started him at once a raw boy, unable to take care of himself as an ensign, and unfitted, save by mechanical routine, to take care of others, should he live to buy the grade of a colonel."

The plans thus promptly formed, Alban Morley briefly explained to Lionel, when the boy came to breakfast in Curzon Street, requesting him to obtain Mrs. Haughton's acquiescence in that exercise of the discretionary powers with which he had been invested

by Mr. Darrell. To Lionel, the proposition that commended the very studies to which his tastes directed his ambition, and placed his initiation into responsible manhood among scenes bright to his fancy, because new to his experience, seemed of course the perfection of wisdom.

Less readily pleased was poor Mrs. Haughton, when her son returned to communicate the arrangement, backing a polite and well-worded letter from the Colonel with his own more artless eloquence. Instantly she flew off on the wing of her "little tempers." "What! her only son taken from her — sent to that horrid Continent, just when she was so respectably settled! What was the good of money if she was to be parted from her boy! Mr. Darrell might take the money back if he pleased — she would write and tell him so. Colonel Morley had no feeling; and she was shocked to think Lionel was in such unnatural hands. She saw very plainly that he no longer cared for her — a serpent's tooth, &c. &c." But as soon as the burst was over, the sky cleared, and Mrs. Haughton became penitent and sensible. Then her grief for Lionel's loss was diverted by preparations for his departure. There was his wardrobe to see to — a patent

portmanteau to purchase and to fill. And, all done, the last evening mother and son spent together, though painful at the moment, it would be happiness for both hereafter to recall! Their hands clasped in each other — her head leaning on his young shoulder — her tears kissed so soothingly away. And soft words of kindly motherly counsel, sweet promises of filial performance. Happy, thrice happy, as an after remembrance, be the final parting between hopeful son and fearful parent, at the foot of that mystic bridge which starts from the threshold of Home — lost in the dimness of the far-opposing shore! — bridge over which goes the boy who will never return but as the man.

CHAPTER XII.

The Pocket-Cannibal baits his woman's trap with love-letters — And a widow allured steals timidly towards it from under the weeds.

Jasper Losely is beginning to be hard up! The infallible calculation at *rouge et noir* has carried off all that capital which had accumulated from the savings of the young gentlemen whom Dolly Poole had contributed to his exchequer. Poole himself is beset by duns, and pathetically observes "that he has lost three stone in weight, and that he believes the calves to his legs are gone to enlarge his liver."

Jasper is compelled to put down his cabriolet, to discharge his groom — to retire from his fashionable lodgings; and just when the prospect even of a dinner becomes dim, he bethinks himself of Arabella Crane, and remembers that she promised him £ 5, nay £ 10, which are still due from her. He calls — he is received like the prodigal son. Nay, to his own surprise,

he finds Mrs. Crane has made her house much more inviting — the drawing-rooms are cleaned up; the addition of a few easy articles of furniture gives them quite a comfortable air. She herself has improved in costume — though her favourite colour still remains iron-grey. She informs Jasper that she fully expected him — that these preparations are in his honour — that she has engaged a very good cook — that she hopes he will dine with her when not better engaged — in short, let him feel himself at home in Podden Place.

Jasper at first suspected a sinister design, under civilities that his conscience told him were unmerited — a design to entrap him into that matrimonial alliance which he had so ungallantly scouted, and from which he still recoiled with an abhorrence which man is not justified in feeling for any connubial partner, less preternaturally terrific than the Witch of Endor or the Bleeding Nun!"

But Mrs. Crane quickly and candidly hastened to dispel his ungenerous apprehensions. "She had given up," she said, "all ideas so preposterous — love and wedlock were equally out of her mind. But ill as he had behaved to her, she could not but feel a sincere

regard for him — a deep interest in his fate. He ought still to make a brilliant marriage — did that idea not occur to him? She might help him there with her woman's wit. In short," said Mrs. Crane, pinching her lips; "in short, Jasper, I feel for you as a *mother*. Look on me as such!"

That pure and affectionate notion wonderfully tickled, and egregiously delighted Jasper Losely. "Look on you as a mother! I will," said he with emphasis. "Best of creatures!" And though in his own mind he had not a doubt that she still adored him (not as a mother) he believed it was a disinterested, devoted adoration, such as the beautiful brute really had inspired more than once in his abominable life. Accordingly, he moved into the neighbourhood of Podden Place, contenting himself with a second-floor bedroom in a house recommended to him by Mrs. Crane, and taking his meals at his adopted mother's with filial familiarity. She expressed a desire to make Mr. Poole's acquaintance — Jasper hastened to present that worthy. Mrs. Crane invited Samuel Dolly to dine one day, to sup the next; she lent him £ 3 to redeem his dress-coat from pawn, and she gave him medicaments for the relief of his headache.

Samuel Dolly venerated her as a most superior woman — envied Jasper such a “mother.” Thus easily did Arabella Crane possess herself of the existence of Jasper Losely. Lightly her fingers closed over it — lightly as the fisherman’s over the captivated trout. And whatever her generosity, it was not carried to imprudence. She just gave to Jasper enough to bring him within her power — she had no idea of ruining herself by larger supplies — she concealed from him the extent of her income (which was, in chief part, derived from house rents), the amount of her savings, even the name of her banker. And if he carried off to the *rouge et noir* table the coins he obtained from her, and came for more, Mrs. Crane put on the look of a mother incensed — mild but awful — and scolded as mothers sometimes can scold. Jasper Losely began to be frightened at Mrs. Crane’s scoldings. And he had not that power over her, which, though arrogated by a lover, is denied to an adopted son. His mind, relieved from the habitual distraction of the gambling-table — for which the resource was wanting — settled with redoubled ardour on the image of Mrs. Haughton. He had called at her house several times since the fatal day on which he had met there

Colonel Morley, but Mrs. Haughton was never at home. And as when the answer was given to him by the footman, he had more than once, on crossing the street, seen herself through the window; it was clear that his acquaintance was not courted. Jasper Losely, by habit, was the reverse of a pertinacious and troublesome suitor — not, Heaven knows, from want of audacity, but from excess of self-love. Where a Lovelace so superb condescended to make overtures, a Clarissa so tasteless as to decline them deserved and experienced his contempt. Besides, steadfast and prolonged pursuit of any object, however important and attractive, was alien to the levity and fickleness of his temper. But in this instance, he had other motives than those on the surface for unusual perseverance.

A man like Jasper Losely never reposes implicit confidence in any one. He is garrulous, indiscreet — lets out much that Machiavel would have advised him not to disclose; but he invariably has nooks and corners in his mind which he keeps to himself. Jasper did not confide to his adopted mother his designs upon his intended bride. But she knew them through Poole, to whom he was more frank; and when she saw him looking over her select and severe library —

taking therefrom the *Polite Letter-Writer* and the *Elegant Extracts*, Mrs. Crane divined at once that Jasper Losely was meditating the effect of epistolary seduction upon the widow of Gloucester Place.

Jasper did not write a bad love-letter in the florid style. He had at his command, in especial, certain poetical quotations, the effect of which repeated experience had assured him to be as potent upon the female breast as the incantations or *Carmina* of the ancient sorcery. The following in particular:

“Had I a heart for falsehood framed,
I ne’er could injure you.”

Another — generally to be applied, when confessing that his career had been interestingly wild, and would, if pity were denied him, be pathetically short:

“When he who adores thee has left but the name
Of his faults and his follies behind.”

Armed with these quotations — many a sentence from the *Polite Letter-Writer* or the *Elegant Extracts* — and a quire of rose-edged paper, Losely sate down to Ovidian composition. But as he approached the close of Epistle the First, it occurred to him that a signature and address were necessary. The address was not difficult. He could give Poole’s (hence his

confidence to that gentleman) — Poole had a lodging in Bury Street, St. James, a fashionable locality for single men. But the name required more consideration. There were insuperable objections against signing his own, to any person who might be in communication with Mr. Darrell — a pity, for there was a good old family of the name of Losely. A name of aristocratic sound might indeed be readily borrowed from any lordly proprietor thereof without asking a formal consent. But this loan was exposed to danger. Mrs. Haughton might very naturally mention such name, as borne by her husband's friend, to Colonel Morley, and Colonel Morley would most probably know enough of the connections and relations of any peer so honoured, as to say "there is no such Greville, Cavendish, or Talbot." But Jasper Losely was not without fertility of invention and readiness of resource. A grand idea, worthy of a master, and proving that, if the man had not been a rogue in grain, he could have been reared into a very clever politician, flashed across him. He would sign himself "SMITH." Nobody could say there is no such Smith; nobody could say that a Smith might not be a most respectable, fashionable, highly connected man. There are Smiths who are

millionaires — Smiths who are large-acred squires — substantial baronets — peers of England, and pillars of the State — members even of the British Cabinet. You can no more question a man's rights to be a Smith than his right to be a Briton; and wide as the diversity of rank, lineage, virtue, and genius in Britons, is the diversity in Smiths. But still a name so generic often affects a definitive precursor. Jasper signed himself "J. COURTENAY SMITH."

He called, and left Epistle the First with his own kid-gloved hand, inquiring first if Mrs. Haughton were at home, and, responded to in the negative, this time, he asked for her son. "Her son was gone abroad with Colonel Morley." Jasper, though sorry to lose present hold over the boy, was consoled at learning that the Colonel was off the ground. More sanguine of success, he glanced up at the window, and, sure that Mrs. Haughton was there, though he saw her not, lifted his hat with as melancholy an expression of reproach as he could throw into his face.

The villain could not have found a moment in Mrs. Haughton's widowed life so propitious to his chance of success. In her lodging-house at Pimlico, the good lady had been too incessantly occupied for

that idle train of reverie in which, the poets assure us, that Cupid finds leisure to whet his arrows, and take his aim. Had Lionel still been by her side — had even Colonel Morley been in town — her affection for the one, her awe of the other, would have been her safeguards. But alone in that fine new house — no friends, no acquaintances as yet — no dear visiting circle on which to expend the desire of talk and the zest for innocent excitement that are natural to ladies of an active mind and a nervous temperament, the sudden obtrusion of a suitor so respectfully ardent — oh, it is not to be denied that the temptation was IMMENSE!

And when that note, so neatly folded — so elegantly sealed — lay in her irresolute hand, the widow could not but feel that she was still young, still pretty; and her heart flew back to the day when the linen-draper's fair daughter had been the cynosure of the provincial High Street — when young officers had lounged to and fro the pavement, looking in at her window — when ogles and notes had alike beset her, and the dark eyes of the irresistible Charlie Haughton had first taught her pulse to tremble. And in her hand lies the letter of Charlie Haughton's

particular friend. She breaks the seal. She reads — a declaration!

Five letters in five days did Jasper write. In the course of those letters, he explains away the causes for suspicion which Colonel Morley had so ungenerously suggested. He is no longer anonymous — he is J. Courtenay Smith. He alludes incidentally to the precocious age in which he had become “lord of himself, that heritage of woe.” This accounts for his friendship with a man so much his senior as the late Charlie. He confesses that, in the vortex of dissipation, his hereditary estates have disappeared; but he has still a genteel independence; and with the woman of his heart, &c., &c. He had never before known what real love was, &c. “Pleasure had fired his maddening soul;” “but the heart — the heart been lonely still.” He entreated only a personal interview, even though to be rejected — scorned. Still, when “he who adored her, had left but the name,” &c., &c. Alas! alas! as Mrs. Haughton put down Epistle the Fifth, she hesitated; and the woman who hesitates in such a case, is sure, at least, — to write a civil answer.

Mrs. Haughton wrote but three lines — still they

were civil — and conceded an interview for the next day, though implying that it was but for the purpose of assuring Mr. J. Courtenay Smith in person, of her unalterable fidelity to the shade of his lamented friend.

In high glee Jasper showed Mrs. Haughton's answer to Dolly Poole, and began seriously to speculate on the probable amount of the widow's income, and the value of her moveables in Gloucester Place. Thence he repaired to Mrs. Crane; and, emboldened by the hope, forever to escape from her maternal tutelage, braved her scoldings, and asked for a couple of sovereigns. He was sure that he should be in luck that night. She gave to him the sum, and spared the scoldings. But, as soon as he was gone, conjecturing, from the bravado of his manner, what had really occurred, Mrs. Crane put on her bonnet and went out.

CHAPTER XIII.

Unhappy is the man who puts his trust in — a woman.

Late that evening a lady, in a black veil, knocked at No. * * Gloucester Place, and asked to see Mrs. Haughton on urgent business. She was admitted. She remained but five minutes.

The next day, when "gay as a bridegroom prancing to his bride," Jasper Losely presented himself at the widow's door, the servant placed in his hand a packet, and informed him bluffly that Mrs. Haughton had gone out of town. Jasper with difficulty suppressed his rage, opened the packet — his own letters returned, with these words, — "Sir, your name is not Courtenay Smith. If you trouble me again I shall apply to the police." Never from female hand had Jasper Losely's pride received such a slap on its face. He was literally stunned. Mechanically he hastened to Arabella Crane; and having no longer any object in concealment, but, on the contrary, a

most urgent craving for sympathy, he poured forth his indignation and wrongs. No mother could be more consolatory than Mrs. Crane. She soothed, she flattered, she gave him an excellent dinner; after which she made him so comfortable — what with an easy-chair and complimentary converse, that, when Jasper rose late to return to his lodging, he said: “After all, if I had been ugly and stupid, and of a weakly constitution, I should have been of a very domestic turn of mind.”

CHAPTER XIV.

No Author ever drew a character, consistent to human nature, but what he was forced to ascribe to it many inconsistencies.

Whether moved by that pathetic speech of Jasper's, or by some other impulse not less feminine, Arabella Crane seemed suddenly to conceive the laudable and arduous design of reforming that portentous sinner. She had some distant relations in London, whom she very rarely troubled with a visit, and who, had she wanted anything from them, would have shut their doors in her face; but as, on the contrary, she was well off, single, and might leave her money to whom she pleased, these distant relations were always warm in manner, and prodigal in their offers of service. The next day she repaired to one of these kinsfolk — a person in a large way of business — and returned home with two great books in white sheepskin. And when Losely looked in to dine, she said, in the suavest

tones a tender mother can address to an amiable truant, "Jasper, you have great abilities — at the gaming-table abilities are evidently useless — your forte is calculation — you were always very quick at that. I have been fortunate enough to procure you an easy piece of cashwork, for which you will be liberally remunerated. A friend of mine wishes to submit these books to a regular accountant; he suspects that a clerk has cheated him, but he cannot tell how or where. You know accounts thoroughly — no one better — and the pay will be ten guineas."

Jasper, though his early life had rendered familiar and facile to him the science of book-keeping and double-entry, made a grimace at the revolting idea of any honest labour, however light and well paid. But ten guineas were an immense temptation, and in the evening Mrs. Crane coaxed him into the task.

Neglecting no feminine art to make the lawless nomad feel at home under her roof, she had provided for his ease and comfort morrocco slippers and a superb dressing-robe, in material rich, in colour becoming. Men, single or married, are accustomed to connect the idea of home with dressing-gown and slippers, especially if, after dinner, they apply (as Jasper Losely

now applied) to occupations, in which the brain is active, the form in repose. What achievement, literary or scientific, was ever accomplished by a student strapped to unyielding boots, and "cabined, cribbed, confined," in a coat that fits him like wax? As robed in the cosy garment which is consecrated to the sacred familiar Lares, the relaxing, handsome ruffian sate in the quiet room, bending his still regular profile over the sheepskin books — the harmless pen in that strong well-shaped hand, Mrs. Crane watched him with a softening countenance. To bear him company, she had actively taken herself to work — the gold thimble dragged from its long repose — working and hemming, with nimble artistic fingers, new cravats for the adopted son! Strange creature is Woman! Ungrateful and perfidious as that sleek tiger before her, had often proved himself — though no man could less deserve one kindly sentiment in a female heart — though she knew that he cared nothing for her, still it was pleasing to know that he cared for nobody else — that he was sitting in the same room — and Arabella Crane felt, that if that existence could continue, she could forget the past, and look contented towards the future. Again I say, strange creature is woman — and in this

instance, creature, more strange, because so grim! But as her eyes soften, and her fingers work, and her mind revolves schemes for making that lawless wild beast an innocuous tame animal, who can help feeling for and with grim Arabella Crane?

Poor woman! And will not the experiment succeed? Three evenings does Jasper Losely devote to this sinless life and its peaceful occupation. He completes his task — he receives the ten guineas. (How much of that fee came out of Mrs. Crane's privy purse?) He detects three mistakes, which justify suspicion of the book-keeper's integrity. Set a thief to catch a thief! He is praised for acuteness, and promised a still lighter employment, to be still better paid. He departs, declaring that he will come the next day, earlier than usual — he volunteers an eulogium upon work in general — he vows that evenings so happy he has not spent for years; he leaves Mrs. Crane so much impressed by the hope of his improvement, that if a good clergyman had found her just at that moment, she might almost have been induced to pray. But —

*"Heu quoties fidem
Mutatosque deos flebit!" —*

Jasper Losely returns not, neither to Podden Place nor to his lodging in the neighbourhood. Days elapse; still he comes not; even Poole does not know where he has gone; even Poole has not seen him! But that latter worthy is now laid up with a serious rheumatic fever — confined to his room and water gruel. And Jasper Losely is not the man to intrude himself on the privacy of a sick chamber. Mrs. Crane, more benevolent, visits Poole — cheers him up — gets him a nurse — writes to Uncle Sam. Poole blesses her. He hopes that Uncle Sam, moved by the spectacle of his sick bed, will say, “Don’t let your debts fret you — I will pay them!” Whatever her disappointment or resentment at Jasper’s thankless and mysterious evasion, Arabella Crane is calmly confident of his return. To her servant, Bridgett Greggs, who was perhaps the sole person in the world who entertained affection for the lone gaunt woman, and who held Jasper Losely in profound detestation, she said, with tranquil sternness, “That man has crossed my life, and darkened it. He passed away, and left Night behind him. He has dared to return. He shall never escape me again, till the grave yawn for one of us.”

“But, Lor love you, miss, you would not put

yourself in the power of such a black-hearted villing?"

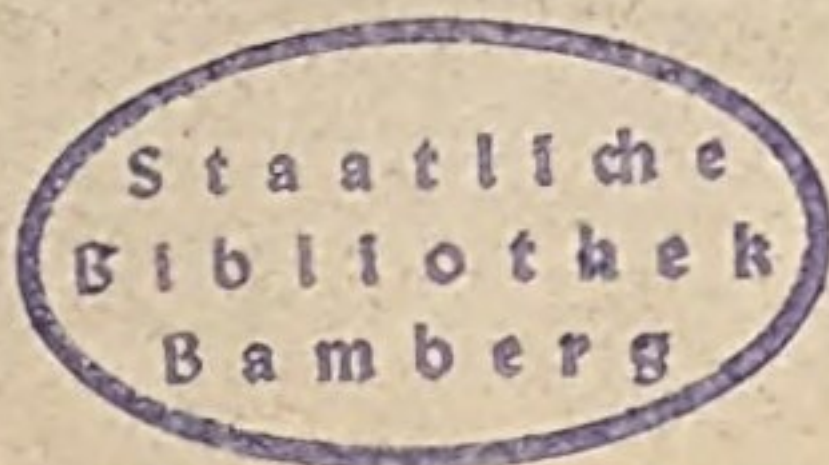
"In *his* power! No, Bridgett; fear not, he must be in mine — sooner or later in mine — hand and foot. Patience!"

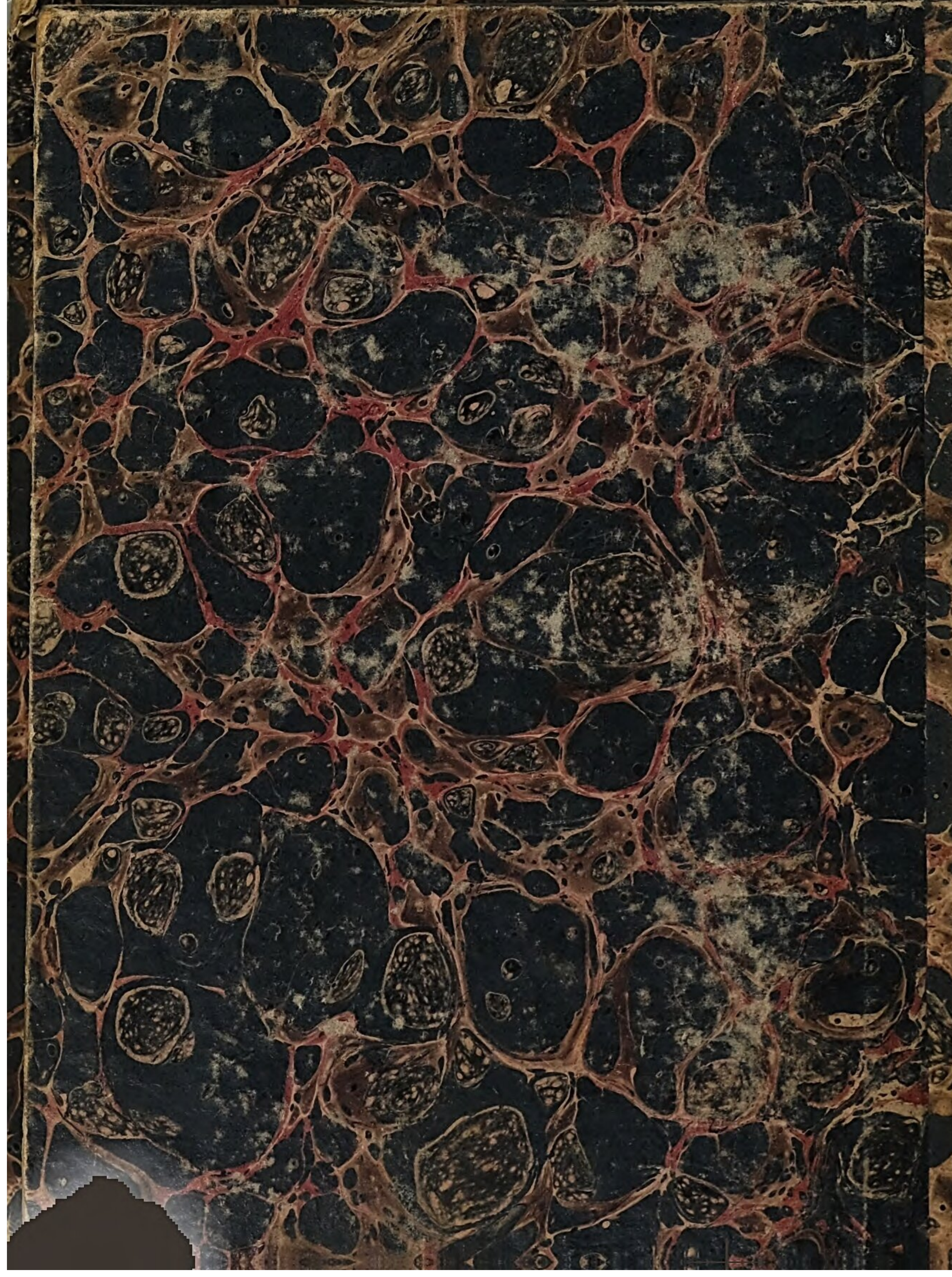
As she was thus speaking — a knock at the door — "It is he — I told you so — quick!"

But it was not Jasper Losely. It was Mr. Rugge.

END OF VOL. II.

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Lytton, Edward Bulwer Lytton,

What will he do with it?

Bd.: 2

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